The ARYAN PATH

Vol. VIII. MARCH 1937 No. 3.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
DIVINE INCARNATIONS	97
REINCARNATION IN EARTH LIFE—*By Merton S. Yewdale*	104
DARKNESS INTO DAWN—	
I.—A REVIEW—*By John Middleton Murry*	108
II.—AN ARTICLE—*By Mark Benney (H. E. Degras)*	110
COLOUR, RACE AND CASTE—	
I.—THE RACIAL SITUATION IN AMERICA —*By Charles Edward Russell*	113
II.—THE CALAMITY OF COLOUR—*By James Stern*	118
THE "GITA" AND THEORIES OF EDUCATION—*By D. S. Sarma* ...	121
FOOTHILLS—*By Ph. D.*	123
PIERCING THE VEIL—	
I.—ABOUT THE GOING AND THE GOAL —*By C. A. F. Rhys Davids*	124
II.—THE QUEST OF INDIA—*By G. R. Malkani*	127
NEW BOOKS AND OLD—	
LIGHT ON THE PATH—*By Claude Houghton*	131
REVIEWS—*By Sir Alexander G. Cardew; Clifford Bax; Hugh I'A. Fausset; Ernest Wood; R. A. V. M. and V. R. R. Dikshitar*	135
CORRESPONDENCE—	
A PROTEST—*By the Hon. Ralph Shirley*	142
A REJOINDER—*By N. K.*	143
ENDS & SAYINGS	144

51, ESPLANADE ROAD - - BOMBAY, INDIA

THE ARYAN PATH

51, Esplanade Road, Bombay, India

CONTRIBUTIONS:—Contributions submitted for publication should be typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with wide margin, and copies should be in all cases retained by the writers, as no manuscripts are returned.

The Editors hold themselves responsible for unsigned articles only. They are not necessarily in agreement with the views of their contributors, to whom they leave free expression of opinion.

CORRESPONDENCE:—Letters from subscribers and readers are welcome, with criticisms, comments or questions on any subject treated in the Magazine. Questions on Theosophical Philosophy and History will be replied to direct, or, if of sufficient general interest, in the pages of THE ARYAN PATH.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:—THE ARYAN PATH is published monthly. No subscriptions are accepted for less than twelve months, but subscriptions may begin with any desired number. All orders should be accompanied by the necessary remittance to the Manager, THE ARYAN PATH. Price: In India, single copy As. 12; per annum Rs. 6. In Europe, single copy 1*s.* 6*d.*; per annum 12*s.* or equivalent. In America, single copy 35 cents; per annum $3; all post free. Back numbers are obtainable on special application.

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Principal Contents for February 1937

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Point out the "Way"—however dimly,
and lost among the host—as does the evening
star to those who tread their path in darkness.
—*The Voice of the Silence*

THE ARYAN PATH

VOL. VIII MARCH 1937 No. 3

DIVINE INCARNATIONS

Gods, Heroes and men would appear to represent, in all sacred literature as in religious myths, the three great classes of self-conscious beings to be found in earthly bodies. Other forms of life, other degrees of consciousness, exist in infinite numbers, embodied and disembodied. Transmigration, metempsychosis and similar terms in all languages and in all traditions may be uniformly taken to signify transit from one world or state to another, from forms appropriate to the one into forms adapted to the other. All this necessarily implies some kind of an intermediate equipment, both of body and of consciousness, by means of which such transfers may be effected. A far greater degree of complacent credulity is required to believe all the immense testimony to be the product of ignorance than to lend it provisional acceptance. Only during the decline of a civilization does materialism tend to replace spirituality. Nothing is more worthy of consideration, but nothing is less pondered on, than the conception of self implicit as well as expressed in every utterance of every divine Incarnation. If Krishna, or Zoroaster, or Buddha, or Christ, or any of the other Saviours meant by the term for the Ego what mankind means generally, then what were all these great Beings but megalomaniacs to the *n*th degree? To take this position is to pit one's own nature and perceptions against the noblest men of all time. None but a fit inmate of the psychopathic ward, none but a hopeless materialist, none but a "lost Soul," could deliberately reject *a priori* the possibility, nay, the probability of continuity with or without memory of antecedent existence, with or without those "intimations of immortality" supplied by religious faith or refined imagination. But either to reject or to accept definitively the melanism of the skeptic or the rainbow visions of the ecstatic is alike unwise. Such

unquestioning finality of conviction assumes that we have already explored the length and breadth and depth of self and of nature—is, in actuality, to take a position of infallibility that our every experience controverts.

What, then, *is* to be thought of one who, like Christ, affirmed, "*I* am the way, the truth, and the life"? Or who, as Krishna, asserted, "*I* am the origin of all; all things proceed from *me; I* am the Ego which is seated in the heart of all beings; it is even a portion of *myself* which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again; and those are carried by the sovereign Lord, *myself,* to and from whatever body it enters or quits"? Are such asseverations as these to be dismissed as childish conceit, as the boasting of senility, as evidence conclusive of egomania? Or do they in themselves throw mankind back upon a reconsideration of the nature of *self*-consciousness, its possible expansion to infinity, or equally, its contraction to the pin-point of identification with body, mind and circumstance? When these questions are fairly faced, one can see for himself that they leave no middle-ground of indecision, no room for mental reservation, no neutral line of indifference. Brought to polarization-point, one becomes perforce spiritualist or materialist in his fundamental basis for thought and conduct.

It is unmistakable that the disembodied "Gods" as well as the divine Incarnations, the "Demi-gods" or Heroes are, quite as much as men, *self*-conscious beings. Is *their* self-consciousness less or greater than ours? Are they nearer to, or farther from, the Infinite consciousness of the Omnipresent Spirit than ourselves?

Two considerations arise spontaneously from such a presentment: What is the true nature of the Self? What is the real nature of metempsychosis? Taking the latter first, and setting aside the speculations of the theologians along with those of the philosophers, any one can perceive that the continuity of Nature is not affected by any conceivable number or variety of changes in form. Whatever Self may be, it is a force, an energy, a substantiality, an intelligence. As such, it no more has beginning nor end in itself, despite all changes and transformations, than the Reality with which it must be identical—as its mutations are identical with those of nature at large.

Practically all the notions of immortality, of transmigration, reincarnation, and so on, are based upon the human conception of self. Neither the one nor the other can endure the cold clear light of reason, of conscience, of judgment flowing from them, any more than they can stand the factual light of mortal birth and mortal death. The language employed, quite as much as the ideas expressed by the great Teachers of the race, precludes alike the human conception of self, the human belief whether in its pre-existence or its survival. The spiritualist breathes the air of faith, but he does not eat the bread of wisdom. Equally with the materialist at the opposite

pole. All that he knows tells him that self is personal, transitory, evanescent, perishable, but he does not inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, their secret of survival. The one goes by what he does not know against all that he knows. The other goes by what he knows against all that he does not know. One is as far removed as the other from the Wisdom of the great Teachers. Neither can, in fact, stand still in such an untenable position. One is drawn by his faith toward the Saviour, the other is pushed by his own experience ever farther away. In the one case, the rise of a religion, a civilization. In the other, its decline and fall. We but stand to-day with the ghosts of Nineveh and Tyre, contemplating "the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome," seeking a Sibyl or an oracle to foretell our own dissolution or regeneration.

The other and enlightening presentment is that afforded by a reconsideration of the divine Incarnations themselves. The great Saviours of the race live in all senses at a far remove from the life led by mankind. In point of human time the nearest to us is Jesus the Christ, or Anointed One. Five centuries earlier than he is Gautama, the Buddha or Illuminated. Five thousand years separate Krishna from the Hindu of to-day. Other Avatars and Messiahs live on in myth and tradition at still more remote intervals. Of these various "Buddhas of Confession," as they are called in some quarters, eleven are said to belong to an earlier continent and a precedent humanity. Twenty-four are identified with our own cycle of human evolution and the renovated earth which it inhabits. Real knowledge of them may form part of the muniments of the Mystery Schools whose outer courts, even, have never been approached but by some method of matriculation impenetrable by the unqualified. Hence, all these many Saviours remain purely legendary and speculative characters to human consciousness. Historical evidence is lacking or withheld in regard to all save Gautama Siddartha, *the* Buddha.

Yet it is, or it should be, self-evident that such Beings cannot be wholly fictions. They could not be the vital element in age-old racial memories without some substantial foundation of truth beneath the jungle of sects, the dogmas of the religions represented or misrepresented by creeds. Something of these great Identities is preserved in incidents, in deeds, in sayings, all more or less authentically attributed to their divine Original. Such records as exist show a close correspondence in the personal careers of all alike. Their teachings by precept and example, as preserved, show a similarity of nature, a fundamental accord, that could not have been invented, that cannot be denied, and that cannot be explained by either theological or scientific exegetes.

When the main features of all are seen to be communal, not individual, that which has always been maintained on behalf of the Mystery Schools as the real spiritual truth, becomes equally the logical deduction of the student of these great Mysteries. The only rational

inference is that these great Beings all belong to a higher Order in nature than the humanity we are, and are acquainted with. It is not unreasonable, because not miraculous, to conceive that these divine Incarnations represent the descent to our own "sphere of expectations" by perfected men, the fruit of former cycles of evolution. Regarded as Elder Brothers of our Humanity, these great Beings appear in an altogether different light—that of being what They are, as returning to this arena of life, under Law, not as coming nor as being, immaculate in nature and birth through miracle or chance. This writing and signature can be discerned beneath all the overlays of theologies and popular superstitions. Just as with a palimpsest, the superscriptions can be disregarded as if they had not been written and rewritten on the original text—and something at least of the teacher's spirit and meaning regained.

Such, in any event, is the great fact whose presence in every world Scripture cannot be denied, however it may be ignored or misapplied. One has but to search and he will without fail be able to see so much of the original intent and message. All that we know of organic and intellectual evolution, divorced from their obscuring clouds of speculation, corresponds in phylogeny and mutation to the like process going on concurrently in the world spiritual as in the world physical and the world metaphysical. Fundamental to any attempt at approaching the unknown as the known is the conception of the Unity of all in Nature in its ultimate essence. Analysis only leads to further efforts at probing the secret of life by dissection or vivisection. All materialism issues from the infinite divisibility of matter, all spiritualism from its opposite, the indivisible nature of the Self or Soul. Both are but half-truths, two numerators each mistaken for the common denominator.

The laws of optics as known to physical science have their correspondence on both lower and higher planes of perception and action than those common to mankind. In that Ultimate Essence "spirit" and "matter" must be one. In its exhibits during manifested life, they can but represent opposite poles, or aspects, of one and the same reality. Outside of miracle, it is impossible to imagine one-way action of any kind. What if Ego, or Spirit, or Soul, should mean the pre-existent Entity, and Matter or Body or Form, the pre-existent *Substance*?—the two together being the duality which perplexes the spiritualist quite as much as the materialist. The unity of the unmanifested Reality, the duality of the manifested, like denominator and numerator, then become understandable. The sum-total of the infinite fractionations do but *represent* that Unity which is their substantial basis. It would be a miracle if mind could be the product of matter, another if spirit could be the product of either or both. Taken the other way about, that is, from the basis of the ever-enduring Perceiver—mind and matter become the Image and the Shadow of the One Reality.

We do indeed, as Saint Paul

wrote, see as "through a glass, darkly" with the eye of sense, but through the mind we see as in a mirror—all things reflected in reverse. But to "the eye of the Lord," the perceiver, the thing perceived, and the perceptions are the same, as Space, Duration, and Being are one. Thus the spiritualist conception of "creation," equally with the materialistic conception of "evolution" is foreshortened vision. The ever-becoming, the pre-existent, and the phenomenal presentments of Life are not things-in-themselves, and so to be regarded as external or internal to Life, but merely as subjects and objects of perception—visions, mere pictures of Self, whether faithful reflections or caricatures of the Perceiver. Materialism takes the shadow for the Reality, spiritualism the reflection. Only Self-*knowledge* realizes what truth is embodied in the phrase of Browning that—

> God is the perfect poet,
> Who in his person acts his own creations.

One has but to reflect that every power attributed by any religion to its "god" is inherent and implicit in his worshippers themselves, and he will sense the divine Presence in himself and in all Nature. No credo of any religion, no scholasticism of any theologian, no amassment of scientific facts, no human possessions of any kind, can serve as substitute for *Self*-knowledge. Who senses this, who perceives this, who feels this, is in the pronaos of the temple of divine Wisdom, and the Saviours of the race speak to him in that Language of the Soul so vividly pictured in the second chapter of the "Acts of the Apostles" of the Christian *New Testament*. He draws as near to Christ as the Aryans of a hundred and fifty generations ago might have drawn near to Krishna when his Disciple Arjuna came into "the vision of the Divine Form as including all forms." Over against these two pictures is that presented by the "confusion of tongues" in the *Old Testament* parable of the tower of Babel. Which of these symbols applies to our existing race-mind, is hardly made a subject for referendum in any of the schools which that mind attends for instruction and enlightenment.

Self is the subject and object in the life and discourse of every divine Teacher—Self as it eternally *is*, not as remembered or forgotten, not as believed or imagined, not as something to be seen or to be reasoned about. We must assume, if we assume divine Incarnations at all, a higher world from which they descend, a vaster plane of perception, a greater sphere of knowledge—one that includes our own, as the world of the mind includes that of the senses. We must assume, then, that their conception of Self is no more ours than the objects of sense are the ideas of the mind, or the mental contents the Mind itself. Perhaps in all this lies the Ariadne thread of true analogy which alone can lead us through the otherwise inextricable mazes of great Nature and our own, through that no-man's-land which envelops human consciousness, toward the primal and final Mysteries. Of these Mysteries all the great Saviours speak and it is they who

may be assumed to know whereof they speak better than we to whom their mission and their message is addressed. Unless there is in us the inherent capacity to profit by their instruction, unless we can grow to their stature, there is neither justice, nor reason, nor mercy in their Appearance. If they are inherently immaculate and we inherently maculate, they do but flout or overwhelm us by their Presence. But if their Wisdom is that of a Higher Self than we know, or remember, or imagine, they are as adults amongst little children. Who considers the spiritual instruction in the simple truth that he who would approach the "Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven" must become as a little child?

Mystery of mysteries! The child knows nothing—yet *knows* that it does not know! It therefore is ready and eager for instruction from any quarter. On the *tabula rasa* of its intelligence there is neither preconception nor treasure either of memory or imagination. Human nature in the adult of whatsoever class or degree is itself an enormous physical and metaphysical palimpsest, which only a supreme act of the will can make once more fit to receive the inscription of the divine Teacher. What act of the will is that implied in the injunction to become as a little child! Many are willing to "stop, look, and listen" to the Sign of the Cross which the heedless do not even see, but how few there are who do all three—and so become able to learn!

The divine Appearances are at long removes in time, but their remove in consciousness is greater still—not by their will, but by ours. The mineral, the plant, the animal, not to speak of "the forces of nature," all dwell in the same world with ourselves. All these Kingdoms are in coadunation but not in consubstantiality, albeit they are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point—one in substance, many in states of progression. Man alone among them is *Self*-conscious. What if our self-consciousness is but as a child's compared with that of the Gods and Demi-gods who clothe Themselves in our similitude and so, "become in all things like one of us"—only to teach us the way, the truth, and the life whereby we may become like unto Them? What if They descend periodically among us only because we are presently unable to ascend to Their world of Self?

That not one of these great Beings was fully understood even by His own Disciples must be as apparent to the student as that They were misunderstood by the "multitude," and worse than misunderstood by the spiritual and material authorities of the day. This is the rational and just explanation of the differing religions, the dissenting theologies, the succession of sects which follow in the wake of the voyage through human life of one of these Great Souls. A rational and just explanation covers still more than this troubled water, for it shows the necessity in spiritual evolution for the serial appearances of Saviours, to restate the original doctrines imparted in varying degrees by the Predecessors. This can clearly be

seen, also, in all great Scriptures. Take for a sufficient example the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, attributed to Krishna, the Avatar at the beginning of the present Dark Age :—

This exhaustless doctrine I formerly taught unto Vivaswat. Vivaswat communicated it to Manu. Manu made it known to Ikshwaku, and being thus transmitted from one unto another it was studied by the Royal Sages, until at length in the course of time, the mighty art was lost....

I produce myself among men whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world. And thus I incarnate from age to age.

The names mentioned bring to light the great fact of Demi-gods or Heroes, second in importance only to that of the divine Appearances themselves. What has History to say of them ?

The world—meaning that of individual existences—is full of those latent meanings and deep purposes which underlie all the phenomena of the Universe, and Occult Sciences—i.e., *reason* elevated to supersensuous Wisdom—can alone furnish the key wherewith to unlock them to the intellect. Believe me, there comes a moment in the life of an adept, when the hardships he has passed through are a thousandfold rewarded. In order to acquire further knowledge he has no more to go through a minute and slow process of investigation and comparison of various objects, but is accorded an instantaneous, implicit insight into every first truth. Having passed that stage of philosophy which maintains that all fundamental truths have sprung from a blind impulse—it is the philosophy of your Sensationalists or Positivists : and left far behind him that other class of thinkers—the Intellectualists or Skeptics—who hold that fundamental truths are derived from the intellect alone, and that we, ourselves, are their only originating causes ; the adept sees and feels and lives in the very source of all fundamental truths—the Universal Spiritual Essence of Nature, SHIVA the Creator, the Destroyer, and the Regenerator. As Spiritualists of to-day have degraded " Spirit," so have the Hindus degraded Nature by their anthropomorphistic conceptions of it. Nature alone can incarnate the Spirit of limitless contemplation. " Absorbed in the absolute self-unconsciousness of *physical Self*, plunged in the depths of true Being, which is no being but eternal, universal Life," his whole form as immoveable and white as the eternal summits of snow in Kailasa where he sits, above care, above sorrow, above sin and worldliness, a mendicant, a sage, a healer, the King of Kings, the Yogi of Yogis," such is the ideal Shiva of *Yoga Shastras* the culmination of *Spiritual Wisdom*.... Oh, ye Max Müllers and Monier Williamses, what have ye done with our philosophy !

—MAHATMA K. H.

REINCARNATION IN EARTH LIFE

[Merton S. Yewdale is a musician as well as a writer. He is a student of the Chinese scripture, the *Tâo Teh King*. Perhaps it is to his sympathy with the Orient that we owe the following very inspiring article. He points out that even in one earth life man goes through a series of incarnations, each separated metaphorically by a death. They may also be thought of as "progressive awakenings." This great truth Oscar Wilde glimpsed in despair when he wrote: "He who lives more lives than one, More deaths than one must die." But Mr. Yewdale has not seen it through the eyes of despair; he has seen it as a spiritual fact through the eyes of hope.—EDS.]

We generally understand reincarnation to be that form of spiritual evolution by which we continue to die and to be reborn on Earth until such time as we are released from all material fetters and return to Earth no more, remaining forever afterward in the Divine Consciousness. But there is another form of reincarnation which we undergo in a single Earth life. Nothing is clearer than that while we are in the flesh, we experience several deaths and rebirths before we finally leave this earthly existence. In *The Secret Doctrine,* H. P. Blavatsky admirably expressed this thought when she said:—

> Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development, we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya.

It is in our physical life that we experience our first reincarnations, which are simple and orderly. We begin life with babyhood, after which we progress successively into childhood, youth, young manhood or womanhood, middle age, and old age. With each progression, our body changes in texture, form, and size; and we really die to one period at the moment when we are reborn into the next. The reincarnations in physical life are plainly to draw us closer to Earth; and the development of the body is to prepare us for our earthly work. Nevertheless, the worthiness of that work depends upon our spiritual reincarnations.

During our Earth life, there are certain times when we feel that we have completed one period and entered upon another—when we have finished some task upon which we have long been engaged; when far-reaching plans which we have made, have at last matured; when some change which has been going on within us, has finally been completed; when we have passed to a higher and more spiritual plane on which we are destined to begin a new work, even a new life; when we have died to one period of Earth life and been reborn into another. This is spiritual reincarnation. William Blake, the great English mystic, poet, and artist, must have ex-

perienced it when he wrote of himself: "Born 28 Novr. 1757 in London and has died several times since."

So definite is the transition that in looking back on a former period, we sometimes find it difficult to believe that it was once real and that it was we who actually lived it. Furthermore, so inevitable is it, that if we resist and obstinately refuse to leave the period; or having yielded to leaving it, we are regretful and retrace our steps and return to it, we eventually find ourselves in the anomalous position of trying to continue working where our task is finished. In addition, we get in the way of others who have already succeeded us, obstructing their progress and injuring both them and ourselves.

Whatever the consequences, we must go forward at the appointed time. We must not turn back; for just as it is bad to turn a clock back, so is it bad to turn a life back. Time moves in only one direction—forward, and we must move with it. There is no way by which we can halt Time or cause it to go backward; and it is only by our memory that we can go back over the road of Time. To resist stoutly, or to go forward and still employ our memory to hold us in the past, is to interfere with our reincarnations, delay our progress, and hinder our growth. Also, if we halt to indulge any selfish desires, we thereby set our back against the oncoming current of Time and thus subject ourselves to its force, which, expended on us, is liable to result in corrosion, disintegration, and even premature death. Progress and longevity come, not by regarding Time as an arbitrary autocrat and wilfully opposing it, but by understanding it to be an all-wise friend and going along with it in faith and harmony. Time is the instrument of reincarnation and the moving pathway to Eternity. To yield to Time is to insure our reincarnations, whose successive unfoldings of our inner life give us an ever-clearer view of the working of the Divine Consciousness.

Rationally, it might seem as though our physical reincarnations, with their accompanying mental development, were sufficient to prepare us for our Earth work. Yet without concurrent spiritual reincarnations, we cannot bring our work to its highest excellence, and we are in danger of succumbing to purely material desires, often base and selfish, and thus being led astray by the delusions which ever grow out of unspiritualized senses. Consequently, it is necessary to have our spiritual reincarnations, since they alone supply us increasingly with the Light from the Divine Consciousness, which gives us a clearer vision of our Earth path; and in bringing us into new periods of our life, the Divine Consciousness sets before us new and sometimes extremely difficult tasks but with richer spiritual resources to perform them. There is no greater error than to believe that the more we receive of the Light and the more spiritual we become, the farther we are drawn away from Earth and the more we are relieved of our earthly obligations. On the contrary, the more

we receive of the Light, the more we are obligated to spread it abroad on Earth—in our work and in our relations with our fellow-men.

At first view, it might appear that our spiritual reincarnations were a direct process by which we were precipitated straight out of ourselves, thus bringing us closer to the work of Earth life. Actually, these reincarnations are successive openings through which we pass, not immediately out of ourselves, but deeper into our inner life where we approach closer to the Light of the Divine Consciousness that is within us ; and the nearer we come to the Light and the greater illumination we receive, the more we are moved to employ it in Earth life, particularly for the good of others. There is nothing more certain than that until we have penetrated to our own inner life and gained the spiritual wisdom and guidance of the Light, we cannot successfully employ it in our everyday life. We enter our inner life that we may come forth more spiritually enlightened ; and the measure of Light which we radiate upon Earth is the measure we have found within ourselves. He who has not discovered the Light within himself lives on Earth in complete spiritual darkness.

Earth reincarnation is also a spiritual reward for a task well done, and it places upon us the obligation to continue our good work and grow in the spirit. No reincarnation comes to us if we have led a life of selfishness, of injustice to others, and of sheer materiality. It comes only after a period of spiritual growth and when we are prepared to enter another period in which that growth may continue.

It is only when all men experience spiritual reincarnations that we may clearly and confidently look forward to a spiritual dispensation on Earth, which will supplant and finally banish forever the age-old material dispensation that has brought so much selfishness, injustice, and disillusionment ; and this will come when the various anthropomorphic conceptions of the Supreme Being have given way to a single and purely spiritual one—for it is the anthropomorphic conceptions that have been largely responsible for the narrow nationalisms and intolerant beliefs and practices which have divided peoples and brought conflict among them.

Throughout history, the most warlike peoples have been those with anthropomorphic conceptions of their gods—and this is equally true at the present day. Wherever anthropomorphism exists, it breeds militant separatism, with a consequent threat and barrier against outsiders.

If men are united in the Divine Spirit, they can live together harmoniously, no matter how many earthly differences they may have. History shows that there never has been any unanimity of belief concerning an anthropomorphic Supreme Being and the frequently violent differences have caused the bloodiest of wars. There can be no agreement in our Earth life unless we first have agreement in the Spirit. Furthermore, no spiritual reincarnations can emanate from an anthropomorphic belief ; for to believe that the

Supreme Being has human physical stature and that we are made in that image, is to emphasize the corporeal over the spiritual, thus tending to make the Supreme Being material and man too little spiritual; and bringing the Supreme Being down to Earth instead of lifting man upward. In addition, the corporeality idea becomes a kind of opaque film which closes our spirituality in, so that we can neither see nor reach it; thus we are forced directly out of ourselves toward the illusion of a corporeal Supreme Being and a correspondingly corporeal Heaven, instead of having a free passage into our inner life, at the centre of which is the Divine Spirit that not only radiates the Light of the Heaven which is truly spiritual, but determines and brings about our spiritual reincarnations.

From a standpoint of human logic, it might seem that our spiritual reincarnations ought necessarily to improve our earthly condition in a material sense. Some religious sects to-day which are not anthropomorphic and teach pure spirituality, nevertheless advocate the doctrine that if a man take the Spirit for his guide and helper, he will thereby insure his material welfare. The result has been that many people have come to regard the Divine Spirit as an aid in their acquisition of material possessions. That living by the Spirit *may* improve our individual earthly condition, is true; but it is by no means an inevitable result. An advance in our spiritual growth may produce quite the opposite result and not only not add to our material possessions, but deprive us of some or all of those we already have. Where the law and the working of the Divine Spirit are concerned, human logic is erring and fallible. What we may reason we ought to receive as a reward, we may not receive at all. What we may think is a loss and a misfortune in our Earth life, may be a gain and a blessing in the life of the Spirit.

The Divine Spirit in its ageless and infinite wisdom gives us no reasons for its decisions. Only by faith and patience can we come even to the faintest understanding of the Divine wisdom—and then generally not until a long time afterward. Also, we can by faith and patience draw ever closer to the Divine Spirit, so that we will be better able to accept the divine decisions without question or complaint.

Sometimes when the Divine Spirit speaks *to* us, it is for the purpose of lighting up some dark and hesitating moment in our earthly journey. But when the Divine Spirit speaks *through* us, it is a sign that our whole life is about to move forward—and this forward movement is spiritual reincarnation in Earth life.

MERTON S. YEWDALE

DARKNESS INTO DAWN

[Mark Benney (H. E. Degras) in an autobiographical account under the title of *Low Company* (Peter Davies, London. 9*s*.) has described the evolution of a burglar. We asked Mr. John Middleton Murry to review this book for us, and we print here his review, as we think, perhaps, it is the most appropriate introduction both to Mr. Benney himself and to the article which he has written for us. —Eds.]

I

This is the autobiography of a young burglar, who is now twenty-six years old. It is a remarkable book in several ways. First, the literary skill of the author is quite unusual. If the language of the narrative is sometimes a shade too richly embellished, that is evidently because the world of words is a realm of gold to the author, exciting him still to the point of intoxication. He is still in the transports of his first love for the fine phrase. But the love is genuine—indeed, so instinctive that there are moments when he reminds me curiously of the young Keats. Certainly, I have seldom read a book by a young author which so impressed me with intrinsic creative promise.

Quite as impressive as his fascination by language and his command of it, is the author's narrative gift. His incidents are vivid, his characters real. The portrait of his mother—feckless, passionate, jealous, completely non-moral by the standards of bourgeois society, yet entering with a sense of relief into the harbour of lower-middle-class respectabilities whenever the opportunity came; by turns, completely irresponsible towards her son, and avid of affection from him —is a masterpiece in a rare kind: for it is the living figure of a real woman. And her consort, "Uncle Fred," nearly rivals her in richness: he also swells into life. These, besides the author himself, are the chief characters of the book. A minor one, Maurice, his friend and hero at Borstal, belongs with them. The same vividness of sensuous imagination has been at work to re-create him. And it is certainly worth noting that these three people are those to whom young Mark Benney was bound in a relation of instinctive love. What D. H. Lawrence would have called "the flow" was between him and them. A kind of physical warmth and immediacy connected them: and they are warm and living in his story.

I myself know nothing about the underworld—of "wide" men and women, whose occupation is to prey on the "mugs," and to circumvent the "bogies"—but Mark Benney's account of it is completely convincing to me. For he, without a trace of sentimentalizing that I can detect, makes it appear a human world. There is blood in its veins, and a sort of rude and reckless generosity in its doings. That this is not an

illusion produced by the creative artist in the author, is evidenced by the simple fact that he himself, without any extreme sense of isolation, or any intolerable feeling of being an odd fish, grew up as a denizen of this queer underworld. It was friendly enough to him : almost a snug environment. His idiosyncrasy, which was a responsiveness to beauty—almost exactly that "exquisite sense of the luxurious" which Keats discovered in himself—did not set him at odds with the life around him. Whatever it was, it was not mean. It was an instinctive protest against the life-starvation inflicted upon man by an industrial society.

That is how, I gather, Mark Benney—in the ample time for meditation given him by a final three-year sentence in Chelmsford Gaol, during which, it appears, he wrote this book—looked back upon his environment and his past. Already, before that sentence, he had been writing. (We learn this from the account given by the publisher on the jacket of the book : rather strangely it is not mentioned in the narrative itself.) At this point, indeed, I am almost personally implicated in the story, because Mr. Benney does me the honour of saying that one of my books had a considerable influence upon him. It is indeed an honour to have had any influence on a creature so gifted. But he found that my book, *God*, left him unsatisfied on the problem of evil, which was the problem that troubled him most. "The fact was, I was an old soldier in the armies of evil...Through long service in their cause, I had come to have a great sympathy with the powers of darkness."

But what is evil ? Certainly, Mark Benney's activities as a burglar could not, without obvious exaggeration, be described as a manifestation of the "powers of darkness." He had no respect for property, it is true. But that is not evil in itself. It has been magnified into a major evil by a particular form of society, of which the individualized property-system is the rickety foundation. No doubt a certain respect for property is necessary to any ordered society ; but that respect can only be unequivocally good when property is distributed with a prime regard to social justice. So long as this fundamental condition does not obtain, disrespect for property is essentially venial. In expressing such disrespect in act, a man takes a risk, and takes the punishment (which is generally excessive). The mere burglar's account with society is pretty square.

The conclusion of Mr. Benney's meditations and perplexities: "There was nothing to fear; there were no overworlds or underworlds, there was only a world," is not only legitimate in itself, but it is substantiated consciously or unconsciously by the whole of his narrative. The problem of evil—in the sense that it is a profound ethical or metaphysical problem—is not really raised by it at all : or settled for that matter. Deliberate cruelty for cruelty's sake plays no part in the activities of the "wide" world, at any rate as he depicts them. His underworld is a world of outcasts from respectable

society—a confraternity of the disinherited, who have intelligence and cynicism enough to wage a kind of indiscriminate warfare upon the society which has disinherited them. They are not heroes ; but they are men and women who in the matter of simple humanity make as good a showing as their more respectable brothers. That they should have thrown up from among them a child with a touch of genius ; that their life should have been rich enough positively to nourish the unexpected plant is remarkable, indeed ; but it is not altogether astonishing.

J. MIDDLETON MURRY

II

" The knowledge of life is higher than life," said Dostoevski. I think it was because I had, from my earliest years, some dim intuition of this truth, that I have been able to outgrow the criminal world I was born into. In childhood my desire for the knowledge of life shewed itself in an insatiable curiosity about the ways of living of those about me; and because my parents and their friends, criminals one and all, seemed to live more zestfully than other people, I acquired an ingrained faith in the criminal mode of life. But even in my most burglarious moments I was more inquisitive than acquisitive. For the life of crime brought home to me, more forcibly than the honest life could have done, that life itself is bounded by dissatisfactions, and that only by enquiring into their nature can one transcend them. But so long as I was merely curious, I simply explored one frustration after another. It was not until my curiosity passed into *wonder* (and how can one explain the world of difference between the two?) that my reformation began.

I began life by thinking of myself and my immediate circle as being apart from the rest of the world. In a criminal environment it was indeed impossible to think any other. For society has elected to think of its thieves and underworldlings as outcasts ; and these have consequently acquired an outcast mentality. I grew up with strong loyalties for my friends ; I could not condemn my own attitudes and acts without condemning all those people I valued most. Nor did I feel inclined to. If on occasion I felt that all was not right in our community, it was the obvious thing to blame the smug, respectable " mugs " who hounded us with their police and threatened us with their prisons. This vague yet potent sense of living in a separate community, and being at one with it, marks the first stage of my life.

But this criminal community I lived in was not without a conscience. My Mother, for instance, although herself reconciled to a life of crime, hoped for something better of me. She took pride in my little school triumphs, she wanted me to be " a gentleman." And her friends, while their practice plainly belied their preaching, were always counselling me to " keep straight, son,"

But if one's sympathies are with the hare, one cannot hunt with the hounds. So I came gradually to feel that I was being rejected by my own community ; that neither in underworld nor overworld had I a place. Yet crime possessed my imagination, and I needed money to gratify my curiosities—sexual, social, geographical. I became a burglar.

That isolation from the two communities is reflected in my choice of crimes : burglary is the least sociable of all predatory crimes.

I was about eighteen when my curiosities led me to literature. Until then my interests had been limited to the actualities of Cockney life. I had aspired to travel, but only because I believed that in foreign lands the more exciting facets of Soho were isolated and lived out to their ecstatic fullness. But books opened up new and surprising worlds to me. Much that had been undefined and inchoate in my life found expression in the novels, plays and poems I read. Hitherto I had asked querulous questions of the world ; books led me to ask questions of myself. Becoming more and more self-conscious, I discovered at last that I was not at one even within myself. I had many purposes, many requirements ; and each in some sort conflicted with the others. I saw myself, not whole and one, but as a man might see himself in a broken mirror, shattered, disintegral. That was the third stage—I was separate even from myself.

I was twenty when I received my first long sentence of imprisonment—eighteen months. Now solitary confinement had two very distinct effects on me. Left very much to myself in the emphatic separation of the cell, my attention became centred on what was going on inside me. If I had realised my inner divisions before, I became obsessed with them now. Their resolution was the object of all my enquiries. But it was not until I began to enquire *why I was enquiring* that resolution became possible. I had to achieve the knowledge of life before I could live. And, paradoxically enough, I had to get lower than life to achieve it.

To explain my experience I must digress a little. We in the modern world-order have complicated our lives almost beyond understanding. We have elaborated individual techniques with social techniques until the simple, basic purports of our life are lost in the structures we have produced. For the organic to be stifled by its own organisation is no new thing ; and there is no lack of Cassandras to warn us that we are treading the path of the dinosaur and mammoth. If we are to belie their words, we must detach ourselves from our structural differentiations and find—to use Mr. Middleton Murry's phrase—that state of " undifferentiated being " wherein lies the secret we have lost. We must descend to the old ignorance if we are to rise to the new knowledge.

The prison, perhaps, gives some advantage in this quest. One must carry into the cell the conditionings of modern life, but at least one escapes its conditions.

So there came one memorable evening in Chelmsford Prison when,

I believe, I experienced for one primordial, immediate moment, life itself, life undifferentiated. I was the single rose striving to be the garden, I was the singer striving to be the song, I was the seer striving to be the seen. And so I learned that behind all the restless rhythms of my life had been a single dominant motive—the urge to Unity.

I learned more than that : for I could see now that life itself *was* this urge to unity, manifesting itself through all the various channels of work, society, art, thought, religion. Unity is the reason for existence and the hunger for it the very pith of experience.

With that realisation, all the barriers I had erected between myself and the world dissolved. For the first time I had certainty in my life. No longer need I be oppressed by the variable life of the world, for I could now understand these variables as the terms of a constant. If unity were the end of life, then all actions which separate men from men are wrong. But I could see from my own experience that all actions, whether they are disruptive or not, are efforts towards some state of unity, or away from some state of disunity. And all our states, bounded as they are by our physiological limitations, are states of separation ultimately. The sterile probity of the respectable people, then, with its thank-god-I-am-not-as-other-men attitude, was an evil to avoid, as was the ethic which produced that attitude. The first ethical assertion of my new creed would be that the worst actions of men are better than *their* best states.

I believe that it is inevitable, given the conditions of my life, that such a philosophy should be its final expression. It is, finally, a purely personal creed, although I believe it to be universally true. But it is the knowledge of life as I have distilled it from my own experience ; there remains the necessity of applying it to the life I have yet to live.

MARK BENNEY

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea :
" And is thy earth so marred
Shattered in shard on shard ?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me !
Strange, piteous, futile thing !
Wherefore should any set thee love apart ?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught " (He said),
" And human love needs meriting :
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot ?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art !
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me ?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home :
Rise, clasp My hand, and come."

FRANCIS THOMPSON

COLOUR, RACE AND CASTE

[The first of these two articles is penned by the well-known veteran humanitarian, **Charles Edward Russell.** The subject has its international aspect, and the cause of the problem in the U.S.A. is—according to our esteemed writer—the sense of caste. The second article suggests a remedy ; it was written in 1932, but had to be held over for an appropriate occasion. The first article brings us the opportunity to publish it. It is from the pen of **Mr. James Stern,** a much travelled man of keen observation and one who has a natural liking for the African and American Negro.—EDS.]

I.—THE RACIAL SITUATION IN AMERICA

Between the years 1930 and 1935, inclusive, mobs in the United States of America put to death 108 persons belonging to what is called the African race. In two instances, the manner of death decreed thus by private vengeance was by burning ; in most of the others by hanging or by shooting, or by both. In nearly every instance, the slayings were accompanied with savage cruelties. These were the most lurid outburstings of the implacable hatreds that underlie what is commonly called " the colour problem " in America.

The term, whatever sanction it may have from usage, is erroneous. There is no " colour problem " in America. A great and appalling cleavage exists between two elements of the population ; the minority element suffers terrible wrongs and heartless persecutions at the hands of the majority element ; but the division is not based upon colour. Colour in these instances is only the distinguishing badge or mark that guides to its target a hatred having a wholly different origin, and one well worth the careful attention of the rest of mankind ; well worth, indeed, more careful heeding than it has ever had.

That colour has at bottom nothing to do with the divisions that rend and disgrace the American social scene is easily shown. Throughout the Southern States of the American Union, wherein these antagonisms are most virulent, what we call " coloured persons " are not admitted to hotels, restaurants, places of amusement, travelling accommodations and even churches that are used by white persons. But this is because they are classed as Negroes, not because of their complexions. Visiting Hindu princes and nobles, often of darker tint than many Negroes, are admitted freely to the privileges and accommodations from which lighter skinned Afro-Americans are barred. So is any tawny-tinted person admitted who can show descent from the North American Indian. Separate (and much inferior) cars on the railroads are set apart for Negro use ; but daily in the South-Western States, dark-hued American Indians are allowed to ride freely with the white passengers. Or again, there are in the United States probably fifty thousand persons of the hated African descent but of tint so light that they pass for white. These, if their ancestry should become known, though they were as blonde as any average Nordic,

would promptly be ejected from any Southern hotel. And it is one of the ironies of a condition otherwise sobering that railroad detectives in the Southern States are supposed to be skilled in discerning what is called Negro blood in persons apparently of the superior white estate.

That such anomalies should exist in a country otherwise so highly civilized and intelligent as the United States baffles the foreign observer as much as it disgusts him. It does not come about without reasons, but to understand the reasons one must know the history of the United States, which, apparently, is asking too much of any foreigner. If he wishes to understand the problem he should begin by grasping the first fundamental fact, which is that *the division is one of caste,* not of colour, nor, so far as that goes, of race.

Caste is the tap-root of the evil, that inherent caste feeling that seems to be the badge of all our tribe. One may well believe that in the Anglo-Saxon psychology exists a queer twist or bent that renders one incapable of the happiness of self-content unless one can feel superiority to some one else. Out of this singular aberration has grown a plenitude of evil, including the undeniable historical fact that the people that have boasted most of democracy are the people having the least feeling for it. Properly to love themselves they must hate somebody else, and who so handy for hating as an element economically submerged, educationally deficient and, above all else in this instance, marked apart by a history fraught, to all narrow, unreasoning minds, with a burning and intolerable goad ?

The economic element, of course, is a factor of great potency in creating this most incongruous helotage in the heart of the Republic ; but even the economic factor is tied by distinct tendrils to the root of caste. The white population of the Southern States, hateful toward the population that is of African descent, will not employ it except in menial tasks, lest it should be no longer " kept in its place." This discrimination results in a surplusage of Negro labour and consequently in a lower Negro wage level, with all the sequelæ of fresh incitements to anger on the part of white labourers. It is the swift, direct, inevitable appeal to the primal instincts of the jungle. " A nigger " has the employment I ought to have and at lower wages ; to kill that nigger is my right, he being my inferior. Doubtless some such impulse fired the troglodyte when informed that an intruder had acquired unduly of the ichthyosaurus supply.

One may learn then without wonder that coloured workers on Southern railroads are likely to be shot by ambushed white men and that when a pretext offers for the lynching of a Negro, white workers form the greater and most violent part of the mob. Nor is there about it, except in one respect, a stamp of locality. In a way, it is the same impulse that moves strikers in Amsterdam to throw strike-breakers into the canal and elsewhere to beat them to death with clubs.

But when the investigator of race conflict in the United States has given full weight to economic causes he will come upon something else not so

easily explained. He will find, permeating strata of society that cannot be affected by economic competition, and among persons totally aloof from all interests of or intercourse with the workers, a strange, malignant, bitter and persisting hatred of all human beings of African ancestry. He will find white men of station, wealth, and even of education, conspiring to prevent legislation against lynching, and secretly or openly gloating when a lynching has been done. He will be compelled to admit that this hatred among such men is often carried to extremes that seem hardly sane and elsewhere would be deemed incredible. To understand this feeling among such men (and women) is the most difficult part of the inquiry and yet unescapable if the problem is ever to be comprehended and solved.

The source of this part of the evil goes back to the great drama of the American Civil War—and beyond it. We are to remember that chattel slavery in the United States was, from the foundation of the Republic onward, confined to the Southern part of the country, where it gradually created a baronial aristocracy closely resembling that of mediæval feudalism. The basis of the slave-owning aristocracy was the insignia of aristocracy everywhere. Having slaves, they did no work, and work was then and, to a great extent, is now the fatal, ineradicable taint of vulgarity and submersion. Equally were these Southern slave barons free from the other degradation of "trade" that marked even the wealthiest Northerner with inferiority. Moreover, the slave barons owned land, much land, always in itself a condition of gentility, provided one does no work upon the land one owns. The slave-owners, being thus secured in the veritable status of "gentlemen" were at liberty to spend their time in self-approval and made full use of the privilege; also in contemplating the degraded state of their Northern compatriots. Altogether, they were qualified to win, and in full measure they had, the favourable regard of the governing class in England and therefore England's valuable support in the Civil War toward which they were steadily tending.

There is no fact in history more pregnant of significance than this, that in the entire South fewer than 400,000 persons owned slaves, and yet, while the other white people in the South had no material interest in the slave system but were in reality injured by it, these outsiders were induced to fight for it as valiantly as if it were something of their own. In a measure, the explanation of this phenomenon lay also in the smouldering snobbery of the race. The relation of the non-slave-owning white to the comparatively few that owned slaves was strongly reminiscent of the relation of villagers and henchmen to the ancient lord of the manor. The Southern white man too poor to have slaves looked with pride and admiration upon the broad acres, servile retinues, stately mansions and imposing grandeurs of his aristocratic neighbours. Sectional pride had its place in determining his mental reaction to the prevailing system. It was only in the South

that " perfect gentlemen " were to be found ; it was only the slave system that made possible this exquisite gentility ; and against the least suggestion of criticism of that system, poor whites flamed equally with the overlords who alone had a tangible profit from the institution.

The Civil War was not an accident but the long foreseen and inevitable fruitage of these causes. Slavery, greatly profitable to the owners, was to the people of the North, who shared none of the returns, an increasing abomination. Immigration was restricted virtually to the North and was almost wholly anti-slavery. Steadily the North outstripped the South in population and therefore in political power. The domination of the South, which for two generations had been unquestioned, was threatened until its overthrow was clearly at hand. Confronted with this prospect, the ablest of the slave-owners conceived a vast and dazzling scheme to withdraw from the Union and create a great slave-empire, including with the seceding States, Mexico, the West Indies and Central America.

Being gentlemen and aristocrats they had from the first seen clearly that against the miserable "mudsills" and labourers of the North they would be invincible. It was more than a boast, it was a firmly rooted conviction, that one Southerner could defeat five Yankees. With supreme and unquestioning confidence they entered upon the war. The result is not to be classed with the ordinary disappointments of human life. Not only did they fail of their sure expectations, not only was their profit system swept from under them, not only were they impoverished or ruined, but the pride of the aristocrat had been trailed in the dust, the whole theory of Southern life had been shattered, and the grandly entrancing vision of an empire of inconceivable riches and power was for ever lost. When, at the end of the war, a half-mad attempt to re-establish slavery had crumbled, the average typical defeated slave-owner betook himself to the nursing of a hatred that he defined and augmented until it was heritable and is inherited.

For one of the strangest facts in this strange story is that more than seventy years after the close of the American Civil War, the passion it engendered in the conquered South burns among a large part of the Southern population as fiercely as it ever burned. And the next strange fact is that this resentment is directed, not against the victorious North, but against what is looked upon as the real source and origin of the defeat and the huge humiliation, which is the Negro. Hence the anomaly that educated and Christian men are found manœuvring to defeat anti-lynching legislation.

Various organizations that perpetuate the glory of the men that fought for the South in that old struggle contribute to the sum total of wrath and wrong, and cannot do otherwise. Their contention is that the cause of the South in the war was just and right and should have won. To maintain this thesis they are driven, obviously and necessarily, to maintain the righteousness of slavery. If slavery was right, it could be right only because of the innate

inferiority of the Negro. If the Negro was so inferior then that he was rightly classed with horses and mules, he must be inferior still. His very existence in a state of freedom, and throughout the North in a state of political equality, is a mordant caustic to all that hold to this doctrine. Never will they admit the marvellous progress that despite every obstacle the Negro has achieved in these seventy years. The mere sight of him is a daily reminder of a great chagrin, of ruined hopes, defeat and a lost cause. Therefore, bar all doors against any admission that he is a human being, and continue, after all these years, to wreak upon him a vengeance that the white preponderance renders perfectly safe.

This is the race problem in America, plainly stated. It will be solved when the instincts of snobbery and of caste are eliminated from the Anglo-Saxon psychology. The process is slow, but no one can deny that it advances. We do not now lynch so many Negroes as in former years. In many Southern communities exist inter-racial committees in which Negroes and white persons co-operate, more or less, to deal with certain inter-racial interests. Slowly, even in the South, there is an increase in the number of persons that have freed their minds of the cave-dweller's ethics. Steadily, the Negro in America piles up his achievements in art, business and citizenship.

As to our lynching of our Negro fellow-citizens, this is our annual record for the last six years :—

1930	23
1931	14
1932	8
1933	24
1934	16
1935	23
Total	108

In times gone by and nearer to the Civil War we have in a single year lynched almost as many as this. We may mark, therefore, an advance in civilization. Also, it is encouraging to note that of our 108 victims in these six years, only two were burned alive.

The element in the population that tacitly or openly upholds the right to lynch alleges lynching to be necessary to protect white women. Of the merit of this plea (which presupposes that there is no adequate organization of justice) the statistics afford a ready test. Of the 108 Negroes lynched in six years, only eleven were accused of assault upon white women. Provocations to mob murder in other instances included " talking disrespectfully to a white man," " quarrelling with a white man," " activity in politics," and in one instance, being " too prosperous." A consideration of these incitements will be enough to establish the underlying cause I have indicated. The Negro must be kept in his place. There speaks the Anglo-Saxon inheritance.

CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

II.—THE CALAMITY OF COLOUR

In North America (to which part of the earth this article is confined) the Colour Problem is not so much a problem as a disease : even then not so much a disease as a gigantic, inevitable Calamity—the natural evolution of civilisation. It is not so much a problem, for surely a problem, to be such, must somehow, somewhen, stand some chance of solution. And a disease, to be a disease, must, within the imagination of man's power to cure, stand even a remote chance of a cure being found for it.

In North America there can be neither solution nor cure. Just as one sees no end to war, so one sees no end to racial prejudice, racial jealousy and hatred, which make for war. There is hate among white nations. The hatred is even more intense between the white and the black races. Here there is more than prejudice, and there is nothing so small as jealousy. It is a thing of the blood. It has been. It is. And it will be. The two races are *different*. And it is more than an incurable disease. It is a growing disaster, a Calamity. It has begun : and there is no going back. It has to be accepted, finally and for ever.

When an oak tree becomes half-filled with rot, after hundreds of years of healthy life, death to the health of that tree has long ago set in. The tree is dying. You may cut it down—or allow it to die a slow death. No one minds which : it does not matter. For when the tree does fall the rot dies with it. The oak's disease has not spread. When a family of dogs contracts a virulent, contagious and *heritable* disease that is bound to undermine and eventually ruin the breed, that family of dogs, if the disease is not fatal, may be isolated and sterilised. Or, if it is fatal, the whole family may be annihilated, thus preventing spread of the disease and any chance of its being inherited.

But Man ! When *healthy* white men and women are irrepressibly drawn towards, mate and bear children with, *healthy* black women and men, and *by so doing transgress no law**: when the blacks have so performed this feat among themselves and the whites until as at the present day in North America the "coloured" people represent more than one-tenth of the entire population, that number, scattered as they are (almost half of the State of South Carolina is Negroid and there are 325,000 in New York City), that number can neither be isolated, nor, what is equally certain, can they be annihilated nor disposed of in any manner whatever ! They are there, and there they are going to remain.

The immediate question that arises is : Does the union of black and white tend necessarily to produce a "diseased" or even, necessarily, an inferior race ? And the just, truthful answer is : we really do not know ! We do not really know because we have had no definite proof. We have had no definite proof

* In the Northern States of America Negroes have been allowed civil equality with whites, and inter-racial marriages are legal.

because in the Southern States—where perhaps there has been, and is, more bitter and uncontrollable hatred than ever there was before between two peoples on the earth, intermarriage has been banned, with the appalling and inevitable result that countless unwanted, hated, and persecuted children grow up in increasing numbers year after year. Here then, in the South, where only the dregs of each race have intermixed, there can be no proof. That this has happened is, in itself, a horrifying Calamity. Because out of this there must spring, there is springing, an inferior and diseased race. That we know.

But what we also know is that the Negro race, given a chance, *is* able to *rise*. Of that we have definite proof. There is very little we know of, that a civilised, cultured Negro cannot do as well as a civilised, cultured white. There is also substantial evidence that the outcome of black and white unions can be, has been, and is being, extremely successful, both mentally and physically. It is a question, however, if there really exist any *blacks* in America. For it is a fact that the majority of coloured people in the United States do not themselves know *how* black they are. But it is probable that 100 per cent blacks are very scarce indeed. To get some idea of the mingling of the two races all one has to do is to compare the colour of the civilised American Negro with that of the uncivilised African. Nearly every coloured American that I have seen has been brown in comparison. I expect there are many more *black* Negroes in Paris alone than there are in all North America.

It is a generally accepted "fact" that the white races are "superior" to the black. But who knows this to be a fact? When, how, has it been proved? What chance has there been of proof? That they are "superior" is not a *fact*. It is a notion that exists only in the white man's imagination: but it is deep-rooted there, in nearly all whites; an inherited notion, perhaps due to an instinctive fear. But it is there, even in small children, that innate antagonism to the black skin. That, I suppose, is the real root of the Calamity. And only one power has the strength to conquer it, and that is the power of sex. When men and women are drawn together there is nothing to be done. Sex is natural, and an unbreakable bond. The American Powers have not allowed for, nor acted in accordance with, this fact. Their psychology has always been at fault, utterly wrong. Their tactics have always been those of prevention. And you cannot prevent: you cannot annihilate desire so long as the desired is within reach: you cannot battle successfully against the power of sex. For the antagonism that exists among the whites who live alongside the blacks is *not* a physical repulsion (particularly if the so-called blacks are already brown). They will tell you it is, for they hate to admit the contrary, but it is not. The attraction white men feel toward coloured girls is so great that for this reason alone it is difficult to imagine how any law preventing intermarriage has not long ago been repealed. There are thousands of white men to-day

living in the South with white wives, and coloured mistresses. If such laws continue much longer the United States will be peopled—as the Southern States are to a fair extent already—with tens of thousands of *illegitimate* coloured men and women.

Thus, if we accept the fact that whites and blacks are going to remain in America together, and the fact that if they do they are, in spite of any law, going to continue to intermix, what Powers there be must perforce consider the Calamity of Colour from the only possible angle : *Give the union of the races every possible chance,* not to promote or encourage their increase, but to exist together under the best possible conditions—so that their union, since it must be, may produce a healthy, normal, legitimate and recognised people, proud citizens of the United States.

We know the calamity is that the white man hates the black man : that the white man considers himself " superior " : that that superiority is being forced down the black man's throat : and that *to-day, in the North, the blacks will not swallow it.* For time and again the coloured man has given proof that he is every bit as good as the white man. In the face of incredible odds he has risen—from slavery, persecution, torture, lynching, and common mass murder—he has risen until now in the North, where in fact he is not hated, he stands and calls himself, too, a man.

Americans know that ; but let them set their faces now to what no one really knows. For they are in an extremity : a Calamity has already occurred, so that it cannot be averted : all that is left for them to do is somehow to attempt to avert further calamities. And what no one knows is that, with compulsory education leading to a higher civilisation, with the banishing of prohibitions and innumerable laws that force the imaginary " superiority " of the whites, particularly the *poor whites,* down the throats of the blacks ; with equal rights and living conditions given to the blacks *and the poor whites* as exist among the whites of higher class—under such conditions and with a universally equal amount of freedom the millions of coloured people in the South might lose that prevailing sense of humility and inferiority towards the whites. In consequence the white man might realise that he himself is after all not so "superior," and the frightful bitterness and old hatred, particularly of the poor white, who is the black's greatest enemy, might dwindle in the course of many years to some form of mutual acceptance of each other, and peace of some kind come to birth out of the very womb of that Calamity.

JAMES STERN

THE "GITA" AND THEORIES OF EDUCATION

[D. S. Sarma is Principal of Rajahmundry College, and has himself rendered the *Gita* into English ; he is therefore well qualified to discuss it with reference to theories of education.—EDS.]

It is said that all modern theories of education may be divided broadly into three classes—(1) those based on humanism, (2) those based on realism and (3) those based on naturalism.

According to humanism the best kind of education is that which conveys to the minds of the young the wide human experience recorded in books. All our notions of literary education are derived from this theory. The study of language and of literature forms here the most prominent part of the curriculum. The best product of this school is the classical scholar.

According to realism the best kind of education is that which conveys to the minds of the young a knowledge of things rather than of words. All our notions of scientific education are derived from this theory. The study of objects and phenomena in the world in which we have to live and move forms here the most prominent part of the curriculum. The best product of this school is the modern scientist, who is ever anxious to add to our knowledge of the world.

According to naturalism the best kind of education is not that which conveys knowledge either of words or of things, but that which looks upon the minds of the young as natural organisms and allows them to grow according to their individual bent. Here the emphasis is shifted from *what* is taught to *how* anything is to be taught. The task of the educator is to study the mind of the pupil, to draw out its powers and to help it to fulfil itself. Our kindergarten methods, our tutorial systems and our educational psychologies are all derived from this theory. There is no doubt that since the publication of Rousseau's *Emile* the introduction of naturalism into our schools has revolutionised our educational methods. Thus at last in education as well as in medicine the importance of following nature and of allowing natural forces to work without unnecessary interference is fully recognised and acted upon.

It is remarkable that this most modern theory of education accords so closely with the teaching of such an ancient scripture as the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The importance which the *Gita* attaches to the natural disposition of men is an aspect of its teaching to which insufficient attention has been paid. Its whole gospel of *Swadharma* is based on nature. To interpret the *Gita* doctrine of *Swadharma* merely in terms of the Indian caste system is to take a very superficial view of its teaching and to rob the scripture of its universality. The caste system in its ideal form is taken by the Teacher as only an example to prove his thesis. It is not by itself his thesis. His thesis in that context is the organic relation that ought to exist between one's natural disposition and one's duty.

And he concludes by saying : "He who does the duty imposed on him by his own nature incurs no sin."

This is a doctrine which, far from coercing the individual, puts every social system on its trial. The *Gita*, while pointing out the importance of one's duty to society or to the state, never makes the individual a slave to any political or social system. If it did so, it would be no better than the Soviet or the Nazi philosophy of today. On the other hand, like every seminal scripture, it raises the individual above the social and political regime and equips him with standards by which to judge any particular system. We are now considering one of the more mundane standards which it sets before him, namely, that in an ideal society every man should do the work which he is best fitted to do. This is the logical conclusion of the *Gita* view of human nature. The scripture clearly says that if God is our father, Nature is our mother. (XIV, 4). So it will not do to suppress nature. Those who subject themselves to severe penances and torture their bodies are men of "fiendish resolves" (XVII, 6). The gospel of Yoga which the *Gita* teaches is not for those who eat too much or too little, it is not for those who are given to too much sleep or to too many vigils (VI, 16). No. Nature is neither to be suppressed nor to be indulged. Wisdom consists in suitably directing it. And the way to direct it wisely is to discover one's *Swadharma* and follow the line of least resistance. *Swadharma* always spells ease, spontaneity and beauty. In a word, the *Gita* would have all our activities as natural and spontaneous as the flowers on a tree. The author would wholeheartedly endorse the view that the task of the teacher is to discover for the pupil his *Swadharma* and to lead him gently along the path laid down by nature.

But when we have said this, we have indicated only one half of his teaching. If the *Gita* had stopped with the perfection of the natural gifts of man, it would not have been worth our attention. To understand the full orbit of its teaching as applied to education, we should go back to its view of human nature. We have seen that it clearly recognises that man is a dual being and that he moves in two worlds, of nature and of spirit. If nature is his mother, God is his father. If nature in man is to be perfected by education, so is the spirit. The natural endowments of the individual no doubt have to be developed, but they should be made to serve a divine purpose. The earth revolves not only on its own axis, but also round the Sun. The two kinds of motion are complementary to each other. Similarly, the aim of the *Gita* is not simply to foster *Swadharma*, but to foster it in the light of Yoga. Yoga is union with God. And God is Spiritual Perfection —the Supreme Reality behind the universe. He is seated in the hearts of all. He is the higher self of all beings. Therefore the process of union with Him is the process of spiritual progress in ourselves and of spiritual union with others. In other words, the aim of education, as of all good life, should be to develop one's individual gifts and to utilise them for the common progress of spirit,

that is, for the enhancement of the higher spiritual values of truth, beauty, love and justice in the world. The claims of the state and of society on the individual are valid only in so far as they are in accord with this common goal. That was what Socrates meant when he said, "Citizens of Athens, I love and honour you. But I obey God rather than you." That, too, was what Gandhiji meant when he said, "I prefer Truth to Swaraj."

We may therefore say in general terms that according to the teaching of the *Gita* that kind of education is the best which has for its aim the enriching of the spiritual heritage of man through the perfecting of the natural endowments of individual men.

D. S. SARMA

FOOTHILLS

Foothills, if you stand close enough to them, can hide the loftiest mountain range beyond. To see them in their true setting one has to put a certain distance between oneself and them. Only in perspective do they appear in their real character—merely the outer fringe of a mountain range the main body of which rises far above the foothills, while its loftiest summits soar among the clouds.

The analogy holds good in many spheres. In politics, party interests obscure national issues; in business, quick returns many times outweigh ultimate values; rare indeed are the detached attitude and the long view which that attitude alone makes possible.

For the average man his personal interests are the foothills. In inverse ratio to how closely he identifies himself with them will be his vision of the mountains that lie behind—his own higher nature and the ideals and interests of mankind, the whole of which he forms so small a part.

Either the mountains must be blotted out or the foothills must be viewed from afar off and so lose their paramount importance in the picture. The concerns and relationships of everyday life, our failures and successes, our ambitions and our apprehensions—these will fill our horizon if we let them. Only when we cease to identify ourselves personally with other people and things can we, as it were, see over and around them.

The cultivation of detachment is not easy. It is not an actual movement in space which is needed but a reorientation, a shifting of emphasis from the transitory and therefore unreal aspect of ourselves to that in us which is of the nature of permanence and reality.

Most of us are looking at the things that concern ourselves personally through the small end of the opera glass and so are seeing them magnified out of proportion. We need to reverse the glass and so remove our personal concerns to such a distance that their relative pettiness shall be apparent.

PH. D.

PIERCING THE VEIL

[Mrs. Rhys Davids invites discussion on her article, and we have, as is our wont, secured a criticism of the same—from the pen of **Professor G. R. Malkani.** In the hope that others will contribute towards enlightening this subject, we refrain from commenting editorially on it, and will content ourselves with the remark that Mrs. Rhys Davids would do well to detail her "direct psychic communications" for the purposes of free and full discussion.—EDS.]

I.—ABOUT THE GOING AND THE GOAL

I have lived a long life giving a frequent glance at periodical literature in Britain ; I have lived several years doing no less to such literature in India ; and I am thinking, as to both, that a revival in discussion, simultaneous or serial or both, such as we have seen in this Journal, is needed. We may not thereby get much further in what writer and reader may be seeking, yet will each scarcely remain unbenefited. Articles on this or that topic—topics often well worth careful and collaborate discussion—come out each in its brief limelight ; are then pushed off the stage and forgotten. How many writers may there not be who, thus dismissed, have hungered for some response ? Some would be big-minded enough to welcome response that was sharply critical. A Hebrew proverb runs :—

> Iron sharpeneth iron,
> So a man sharpeneth the face of his friend.

He might be thereby helped either to vindicate the strength of his own position, or to discern that it was here or there weak. No man is a strong speaker merely in virtue of a statement which has not sustained the test of a just, if amicable, criticism. If his statement be kept to the fore while one or more rejoinders are printed about it—he possibly willing and being permitted to respond—his theme will have won enhanced interest, and will, it may be, persist in readers' memories as otherwise it might never have done. Concerning this it may be riposted, not without truth, that not a few articles get into print which might better die quickly undiscussed. True, yet how may such not be lingering, an unhealed canker in some one's memory ; or, to take a milder view, causing him to dwell on darkness when what is both needed and possible is more light.

For instance, I have noticed articles, in Indian journals especially, wherein a myopia is shown and indeed complacently treated, about what I have called here the going and the goal, which India's age-old culture would not have led us to expect. India has claimed, and not wrongly, that her chief preoccupation, as compared with that of other lands, has ever been the whence, the what, the to-be of the man, *purusha*, soul, self, spirit. In so far as this is true, I cordially subscribe to her deeper wisdom. Yet now and then I see articles wherein these questions about the man are still raised in doubt and darkness, the writers seemingly un-

able to predicate anything as certainly established and accepted as is any child of the West. What they have seemed to steer by may be a few badly understood mantras from the Upanishads.

Yet in these the teaching that man can anticipate his departure from earth by his experiences in his "other body" during deep sleep (not the light sleep of dreams), finds no mention. Why is there no will shown to exploit this suggestion? Nor any other will of the same sort? If we have come to know (to repeat a parallel drawn before) that each of us must before long, it may be even tomorrow, leave home to take up our residence in a little known, or quite unknown, country, each of us will, *if we are civilized,* use every effort to learn, if learn we may, anything about that country, geographically, socially, politically. Here we have, in what lies before us, not a may-be, but a will-be, must-be. Does indeed a country await us? If so, what is it like? Does nothing really depend as to our coming to know, on whether, or not, "we seek one yet for to come?" Do we seek? Can we call ourselves "civilized" if we do not? *

In the articles I have noticed there would seem to be nothing they have yet found between a "whirling round in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth" and the "opening up of the mystery of heavenly bliss and evergreenhood," the latter being only for "the few blessed." If such be the results of her modern seeking, all one can say is "Poor India!"

Again, there is a matter on which the great scriptures show much agreement, but which such blighted seeking seems wholly to ignore. This is the fact of adjudication, at or not long after death, administered not by god or devil or angel, but by men once of earth, from which no one is exempt. Here India, for all her claims, would seem to be woefully vague. Original Buddhism, before degenerating and dying out from her shores, had taught her much, at least as much as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity have taught, but Buddhists have forgotten this, ignore it and substitute an unfounded doctrine of automatic results of deeds done.

Now these accounts are not merely edifying, deterrent legends in ancient writ. From the time I won my way to direct psychic communication I learnt that such world-wide adjudication was proceeding, in country after country, incessantly by day and by night. But how rational is not such an institution, once the country to be sought is accepted as real! What should I think of a country, where an estate was awaiting me, if I heard that the murderer, the persecutor, the thief, the cheat, the fornicator among such as had migrated thither, were let run loose in it to work their will? In such adjudications are revealed, first, the persistent responsibility, not of a new-born complex, but of the very man who has taken the next step; secondly, the mile-stones in his wayfaring in the worlds, he seeking not merely a country round the next bend in the road, but a further bourn, the ultimate goal of his going—that which as yet he believes in, but cannot con-

* I may refer to my forthcoming book, *What is your Will?*

ceive, much less comprehend. Here for the Indian is Yājñavalkya's way (*panthā*) of man's faring towards Brahman ; here is the Sākyamuni's road (*magga*) of man's evermore coming to be. Had India remembered this, we should not at this time of day see her sons publishing articles groping in a dark unknown.

In other writings dwelling on the goal of life, I find a tendency, common to medieval Indian and modern European culture, to take ideas about a thing rather than the thing itself. Thus the goal is described or defined as " knowledge " or as bliss. These are of course two of that late trinity : " being, mind, bliss," wherewith India came, as it were, to sum up Deity.

I agree with such writers that there is a goal and quest of " life." Oftener than not the man of to-day confines his outlook to a limited temporary bourn, a bourn limited to attainment merely in his instruments, bodily and mental, to the furtherance and well-being of these, instead of looking to culminate in That who is, in some yet inconceivable way, Man. But herein I do not agree with an interposing between man-as-he-is and Man-as-he-may-become, a *quality* of the man, as being itself the goal, and wording this " how " of his perfected becoming as knowledge or as bliss.

This substitution of a quality for the supreme Thing Itself, for the Highest, Most, Best, breaks down when it is, as often happens, defined in terms of something else. Thus I have read that happiness, when properly analysed, is a state of self-elevation, self-expansion, self-joyousness and self-enrichment. Evidently here, for such writers, happiness or bliss is one aspect only in four of a something yet more central, more ultimate : the self, the man. Surely the supreme goal is not just one of these four, but That in whom all four may be resolved. Here the Christian saint was unwittingly at one with those Sayers of the Upanishads when he wrote : " Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee." He did not say : " made us for happiness " ; " rest in bliss." How feeble does not the makeshift sound ! Happiness is not that which we seek ; it is a state of him who is finding, of him who will have found. Happiness is his because of the state which he seeks ; it is produced in him by the state he seeks, as the perfume is produced by the flower. It is his worth in that becoming-utterly-well which is his goal, whence comes his happy feeling, whether he be wayfaring or at way's end. It is not the thing sought.

Nor is the worth in " rest " or in " peace " the thing sought. Man's instruments aiding the search need rest ; they wear out, but the user will not rest, nor will to rest till he find ; and when he has found, he will not need rest. Peace, again, is worth in a thing to be unneeded at way's end. Peace is a negative idea, a getting rid of worry, clash, jar, war ; as such it belongs to the seeker as believing, as expecting. It is not the ultimate ideal itself. I have noted bliss as equated by " perfect wantlessness." Here again is a negative idea, a result, one might say, of the static ideal expressed in the first of the trinity of terms referred to. It is an ancient and a poor concept of the goal, the

idea of "the getting rid of" a limited individuality or self, rather than the idea of a culminating man. It is conceiving "becoming" as merely the progressive dropping of imperfections, instead of an essentially divine nature ever willing to become the New. No shadow of the idea of a stopping, a having stopped, of static rest, should mar, should limit our concept of the Best, the Highest, the Most.

As yet and for a long time to come, we writers are wayfaring within the limits of the More. Not yet do we "know as we are known" by the Most. Wayfarers are we, and as such we can be happy, restful, peaceful because we have come to know ourselves as wayfarers. We have much to learn, and there is much we can now train ourselves to learn, concerning the Way that most of us think is here and now impossible.

C. A. F. RHYS DAVIDS

II.—THE QUEST OF INDIA

Mrs. Rhys Davids finds fault with the modern tendencies of Indian thought in so far as this finds expression in periodical literature. She may be right. It is probably true that Indian thought is not quite alive to-day either in its own tradition or in the tradition of the West. India is passing through a transitional period in which imitation of the West replaces to a certain extent its own creativeness. But Mrs. Rhys Davids goes beyond a criticism of modern tendencies. Her criticism embraces the age-old culture of India and what India most cherishes—the ancient wisdom concerning the highest, the deepest and the perfect Man.

Mrs. Rhys Davids subscribes to the deeper wisdom of India in so far as there is this deeper wisdom. But she is not quite sure that there is. Her attention is apparently held by certain articles wherein the ultimate questions about the man "are still raised in doubt and darkness, the writers seemingly unable to predicate anything as certainly established and accepted as is any child of the West."

Yet no one can deny that India has always hankered after knowledge which would remove all doubts, drive away the darkness of ignorance and lead to certitude. It is never satisfied with a "may be," but only with "what certainly is." It has sought a direct revelation, a direct knowledge in the domain of the spirit to which the West is quite a stranger. Neither European philosophy nor European religion has ever shown such boldness to ask, much less to handle on strictly rational lines, the ultimate questions regarding man and the universe.

Has India shown any lack of will to work out to the full the question of the Hereafter or the destiny of the soul? Her answer or answers may not satisfy those who approach them with a different cultural background; but no one can ever doubt that the question is ever in the foreground of Hindu religious thought, and that the solution offered is bold and far-reaching. It goes farther than most philosophical or religious thought of any other land would be prepared to

go. Is there nothing between a "whirling round in the cycles of birth, death and rebirth" and the "opening up of the mystery of heavenly bliss and ever-greenhood"? There may be much. What that is, only the spiritualists claim to know. And their pretensions appear to be great. But can any one show what value for *spiritual life* all that hypothetical knowledge has?

The ultimate certainties are within the soul of man. They are quite immediate. They are no more dependent upon the mysteries of spiritualism than they are upon the quest of the physical scientist. Modern India does not presume to seek new truths in the field of the spiritual life. She merely seeks to understand and to reinterpret the eternal wisdom. The so-called "results of her modern seeking" do not diverge from that wisdom. If those results are poor, indeed all her wisdom must appear poor to an outsider.

The most important criticism, however, is the criticism against what Mrs. Rhys Davids considers to be the goal of life as stated by modern Indian writers on the subject. She does not think that the goal can be described as "knowledge" or as "bliss." These are at best attributes of the soul, not the soul itself. This is a common criticism of European writers. Hindu thought, they think, has gone wrong in identifying the ultimate self of man, or Atman, with "being, intelligence and bliss." These are not *the thing*, but the attributes of the thing. This criticism, in our opinion, is superficial. There is a kind of knowledge which arises and then disappears. There is also a kind of happiness which comes and goes. Such knowledge and such happiness are not what are identified with the self of man. Is there any other knowledge and any other happiness? The uniform answer of Western thinkers would be that there is none. If there is none, then indeed is the identification in question wholly meaningless. Indian thinkers would admit as much, and with greater vigour. But they have sought and found a deeper ground of reality. Their insight extends beyond the arena of the states and modifications of the mind. Can any distinction be drawn here between the thing and its attributes? The Indian thinkers declare that this is impossible. The distinction is valid only in the empirical field. It is valid only for substances of perception and thought. It is not valid for what is essentially transcendental and no object of thought whatsoever. The transcendental reality has no distinctions; it is not differentiated; and yet we cannot deny that it is *the being* in all that has being; it is *the true intelligence* in all that is intelligent; and it is *the true happiness* in everything that man calls happiness. It is the culmination of being in every sense of the term.

Mrs. Rhys Davids thinks that the ideal of pure being is a static ideal. The ideal of bliss as "perfect wantlessness" is in conformity with the former and is merely negative. And she sums up her argument by saying: "It is an ancient and a poor concept of the goal, the idea of 'the getting rid of' a limited individuality or self,

rather than the idea of a culminating man." She offers instead the idea of "an essentially divine nature ever willing to become the New."

We find no fault with her for what she thinks should be the true ideal or goal. The goal she sets before herself is in conformity with the whole trend of European thought. The ideal is what can never be accomplished, but is ever in the accomplishing. All we can say is that this is not the goal for which India hankers; and when Europeans criticise the ideals for which India has stood from time immemorial, Indian thinkers feel that they have been misunderstood, and that the truths which they regard as indubitable have yet to win their way into the Western mind.

The ideal of an essentially divine nature ever willing to become the New is foreign to the Indian mind. The divine is eternally accomplished. There is nothing that can be added to it. It is perfection itself, the complete fulfilment of everything that man can possibly aspire to be. *This divine being is not a distant God. It is man's own true and inmost self.* Man in his essential being is divine. He is *Brahman,* the Absolute. He does not need to be different from himself. He does not need to be more. He is the very Most. What detracts from his divinity is merely his ignorance of his true nature. Ignorance alone stands between him and the full deity. What should he aspire to achieve, when every achievement is already accomplished in his eternal divine nature?

Is this a negative ideal? Those who think so should try to define to themselves the notion of the highest being or what Mrs. Rhys Davids would call "becoming-utterly-well." We do not easily rise to the full valuation of the Perfect. All our values are of the imperfect. But even so, it is a wholly mistaken view to suppose that the Indian ideal is a negative one. *Being* is not a negative concept. The being which the Indian seeks to know is the being in all being, the essential being, the ultimate being. The idea of intelligence or consciousness is not a negative idea. If we ever seek to be anything, we can only seek to be conscious and intelligent beings. "Consciousness" is for us an essential value in the matter of being. Is the idea of happiness a negative idea? Evidently it is not. When the highest happiness is equated with wantlessness, all that is meant is that happiness has no content. It is not of the nature of an enjoyment, which has a necessary reference to an "other." All enjoyment is preceded by want, and it is only as this want is eliminated that the enjoyment emerges. If you want nothing, you can feel happy in nothing. But when you reject all happiness in things, there is the eternal happiness of your own nature which is yours. Vedantic writers are quite explicit on this. Happiness is essentially positive. It is the very nature of the self. Only this positive happiness must not be conceived as involving any kind of mental activity. In conformity with this whole ideal, Indian thought is very emphatic that the goal is the getting rid of our limited individuality, the seat of all pain, and not the achieving of a new value which we lack in our essentially divine being. It is a clear conflict of ideals. Is the

divine in man ever to become New, or is the divine in man an eternally accomplished perfection? India stands for the latter concept.

It is a common European criticism against Indian ideals that happiness cannot be an end in itself and that it is wrong to set it up as the goal of all our effort. It is at best a reward of goodness, a by-product of perfection. It comes of itself when we do not seek it. It would be pertinent here to ask whether in all our aspirations we are not guided by the need for inner harmony, inner peace and inner well-being. If we are, then happiness is no mean ideal. The odium which the term has achieved in the thought of Western writers is due to a false notion of happiness. They conceive of happiness as a subjective state exclusive to *a* person. Vedanta would declare all such happiness of a limited individuality as merely pain. The happiness it seeks is not an exclusive affair, the possession of a private mind. That happiness is the result of *moha*, ignorance and attachment. The happiness it seeks is the happiness which is inherent in our true being which is divine. If that is a sin, or if that is not a sufficiently high ideal, then it is a sin to aspire after divinity or to seek to be divine. Indian thought opens the way, to those who would follow, "to 'know as we are known' by the Most."

G. R. MALKANI

If a man should hold himself dear, then let him ever guard his self and watch it well. Let a wise man keep himself wakeful during one of the three watches of the night.

Let each man direct himself first to a suitable calling in life, and then let him instruct others. Thus a wise man will be free from worry.

Let each man make of himself that which he instructs others to be. Himself well controlled, he may control others. Very difficult to subdue is the self.

Self is the Lord of self; what higher Lord could there be? When a man subdues well his self, he will have found a Lord very difficult to find.

—*The Dhammapada*

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

LIGHT ON THE PATH*

[Claude Houghton, the well-known novelist reviews a sparkling gem of Theosophical literature. This was first published in 1885 and has helped more than one generation of aspirants to the Higher Life.—Eds.]

Howard H. Brinton points out in his remarkable book, *The Mystic Will,* that Boehme's central problem was the reconciliation of two different orders of Will—the resigned will, which seeks divinity through self-surrender; and the assertive will, which seeks dominion over external nature.

The out-going will expands upon a world of many things unrelated by inner connections. Of itself, it finds only multiplicity. It flies for ever outward, seeking a goal in vain, until it becomes lost in the infinite reaches of space. The in-going will contracts upon a basic unity at the centre of the soul, but as it contracts it leaves the world behind, and becomes lost in the utter blankness of unity.

In other words, the goal of the in-going will is the supernatural, whereas the goal of the out-going will is the world of nature.

Now, it is clear that the realities of the in-going will must seem chimerical to the out-going will, and vice versa. It was wisdom, therefore, to print under the title of this book: "Written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within its influence." It was wisdom for, lacking this desire, the contents of this book would seem as fantastic as the Sermon on the Mount.

It is essential to realise this at the outset. This book reveals the vision of a consciousness wholly other than ours, but one which we possess potentially. If it seem strange, it is wise to remember that the perspective of a bird will necessarily seem strange to that of a frog. Our present consciousness may approximate to the latter, but it does not follow that it is our birthright.

"Adam's fall" has been defined as a fall from eternity to time; that is, from seeing things simultaneously as organisms to seeing them successively as mechanisms. Adam fell from universality to particularity. We see as separate what is one in spirit. And so long as we are satisfied in our dark isolation, we shall regard all references to our former high estate as fantastic paradoxes.

Light on the Path is a treatise for those who know they are living in a "far country," where they have spent all, where a mighty famine has arisen—and who wish to return to Reality. To them, this book will be wisdom—and only to them. To those who have no desire for a new consciousness—no desire for a new order of being—this book will seem not only nonsense but an invitation to die on some sinister instalment system. They

* *Light on the Path,* written down by M. C. (The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles. Theosophy Company (India) Ltd., London, and 51 Esplanade Road, Bombay, India.)

would regard The Sermon on the Mount in precisely the same way if familiarity had not numbed them to its true content. To the natural man —the man satisfied in the flux of sensation—the statement that the meek shall inherit the earth is just a lie. And to suggest that he should turn the other cheek to an aggressor, is to insult his conceptions of honour, dignity, property, and all the rest of it.

And yet, so paradoxical is the realm into which this book initiates us, that such a man opening it haphazard, and reading one or two of its aphorisms at random, might easily stumble across some to which he could give enthusiastic assent.

For instance :—

13. Desire power ardently.
15. Desire possessions above all.

This might be the creed of power politics reduced to two sentences ! But, between those sentences, is " Desire peace fervently." And, following the second, is the statement that those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. And it goes on to explain that the peace you shall desire is the sacred peace which nothing can disturb—and that the power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.

The first fourteen pages of this book consist of forty-two numbered aphorisms, divided into two parts. They are rules written for all disciples and only for disciples. The more they are studied, the more their organic unity is realised. No one aphorism can be isolated.

Consider the first three :—

1. Kill out ambition.
2. Kill out desire of life.
3. Kill out desire of comfort.

Now, many a Western reader, putting down the book at this point, might exclaim : " Oh, here's the old Eastern stuff all over again ! Kill everything ! Die by instalments ! And you'll attain Nirvana—which is Nothing, with a big N ! "

But the next statement is :—

4. Work as those work who are ambitious. Respect life as those do who desire it. Be happy as those are who live for happiness.

Two-thirds of this book consists of Comments on the numbered aphorisms—comments by the author, first published in H. P. Blavatsky's *Lucifer*. Each has for text a sentence from the rules which precede the numbered aphorisms. Actually, these latter are an attempt to make the unnumbered rules more intelligible—an attempt which is successful to an almost unbelievable degree if the aphorisms are studied in conjunction with the comments.

Now, it is a recurring theme of these comments that this book is written in cipher. " There is a law of nature which insists that a man shall read these mysteries for himself." Again and again, it is stated that this book is for disciples, and that a man must first become a disciple before he can even see the paths between which he must choose. " This effort of creating himself as a disciple, the rebirth, he must do for himself without any teacher."

An indispensable preliminary, therefore, to any understanding—even a merely intellectual understanding—of *Light on the Path* is that the student shall have experienced in some degree the mystery of re-birth. He must be aware of potential power in himself to achieve a new consciousness. He must have faced the great enemy—himself. He must have the courage to confront his own soul in the darkness and the silence. He must have conquered the animal self which inhabits sensation.

This is the reason why all writing of this profundity is "sealed." Knowledge of this order has to be earned. It cannot be lightly acquired, for the responsibility it involves is not light. It is useless to say : "Why can't they state plainly what they mean, in language the average man can understand ?" The futility of the question is revealed by the fact that every science, every profession, has its own terminology which is meaningless to the uninitiated. The mysteries of interior life cannot be revealed in some instantly-understood slogan.

If one may be imaginative—and we are in a region which only imagination can illuminate—we might express this difficulty of making mysteries plain by an analogue.

Let us imagine a butterfly attempting to explain to a caterpillar (in terms familiar to the latter) the essential quality of butterfly-consciousness. In the first place, every word used by the butterfly would instantly be reduced by the caterpillar to the level of its own experience. This would be inevitable, for the two are separate by the abyss of a mystery. To the caterpillar, a chrysalis is a tomb. To the butterfly, a cradle. And both are right. "All that is—is double." Only by losing its life will the caterpillar gain it. Only by dying to its present order of consciousness will it attain freedom, beauty, and—wings. But how should the butterfly convince the caterpillar that it will rise radiant from the death of all that is dear to it ? How should it explain this profound mystery to a caterpillar—who probably does not believe that butterflies exist ?

To enter the realm which this book reveals is to be ringed by paradoxes :—

> As he flings life away it comes to him in a new form and with a new meaning. The world has always been a place with many contradictions in it, to the man ; when he becomes a disciple he finds life is describable as a series of paradoxes.

It is in this realm, and only in this realm, that the enigmatic statement, "Ask and ye shall have," is true. It is true only when we can "ask" in the mystic sense in which the word is used. If all of us, as we are to-day, had merely to ask for what we think we want in order to receive it, the world would be an even greater horror than it is. The desire behind the request determines the response.

It was the paradoxical-seeming nature of the message he had to convey which made it imperative for Christ to speak in parables. And it was to indicate that the whole of his meaning was not apparent on the surface that he threaded those parables with the refrain : "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Anyone,

whatever his degree, who attempts to reveal the realities of interior consciousness must "seal" his words, for, underlying his most trivial-seeming utterance, is the inevitable theme: "Behold, I show you a mystery."

Nevertheless, it would be false to infer that *Light on the Path* is written for "the elect." It is written for those who have reached a certain stage in their development—a stage which lies in the destiny of all.

There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced—but it is there. At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope, and love. He that chooses evil refuses to look within himself, shuts his ears to the melody of his heart, as he blinds his eyes to the light of his soul. He does this because he finds it easier to live in desires. But underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality. Find them, and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it, however he blind himself to the fact and build up for himself a phantasmal outer form of horror.

But the mystery of re-birth must precede self-less collaboration with the Eternal. And it would seem probable that the number of those who experience this mystery must increase in an age in which, one by one, the landmarks deemed eternal crumble and slide to shapeless ruin. We of this age who have gazed long into the abyss—gazed so long it may be that, in Nietzsche's phrase, the abyss has also gazed into us—we of this age must realise sooner or later that here we have no continuing city, and set forth on the path which this book illuminates.

At the outset, it will and it must seem that the solid ground is crumbling under our feet—that the Known, the Familiar, the Accepted are dwindling to shadows in a region of shadows. To unreality, the Real must seem spectral. But one assurance we have, if no more, and it is the knowledge that we have set forth for the promised land only because the bondage of Egypt had become unendurable. No man deserts the flesh-pots who believes that they contain sustenance. If we enter on this path, it is because we have reached a stage in our destiny at which one world is dying—and another is struggling to be born.

If the path seem to lead to fantasy, if the words of one who has preceded us seem spectral, at least we know that to retrace our steps is to re-enter chaos.

And if in our intolerance, or in our fear, we cry to one who is ahead of us—as Boehme's neighbours cried to him: "What ails the fool? When will he be done with his dreaming?"—he may reply, as Boehme did: "You will see what kind of a dream this will be."

CLAUDE HOUGHTON

History of Free Thought in the Nineteenth Century. By J. M. ROBERTSON. (Watts and Co., London. £2-2.)

Among the many iconoclasts who during the last forty or fifty years have hammered at the doors of the Churches, disturbing the slumbers of pious folk, few have played a more important part or possessed a more dominating personality than the late John Mackinnon Robertson.

Born in humble circumstances in 1856 in an island off the west coast of Scotland, he is said to have attended the village school up to the age of thirteen, from which period he was to a great extent self-educated. Making his way to Edinburgh, he entered a newspaper office and soon afterwards came to London where he became an assistant to Charles Bradlaugh. From that date most of his energies were enlisted in the cause of Free Thought and Materialism. However, in 1906 he was elected a Member of Parliament for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland, and he sat in the House for a dozen years. John Forster used to say that he would have been in the Cabinet ten years earlier, if he had been at Eton. Robertson never entered the Cabinet, but he became Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade 1911-1915, and a member of the Privy Council ; and it is at least possible that with his striking abilities and great force of character he might have become an important political leader if he had had greater educational and social advantages in early youth. As it was, he won a very definite position in politics, being naturally enlisted on the Liberal side, and Lord Snowden has recorded the opinion that he was one of the two best debaters in the House. A man of handsome appearance and ready wits, who had mastered several languages and had equipped himself with a wide range of knowledge, his strong personality and ability must have brought him to the front in any assembly.

Robertson was a prolific writer and produced a large number of books on subjects as varied as the Eight Hours Question, Free Trade and Tariffs, The Shakesperian Canon, Shakespeare and Chapman, Bolingbroke and Walpole, all marked by the same grasp and certitude. He was probably the chief of what is called the disintegrating school of Shakesperian students, and he was just as positive as to his correctness in assigning a play, or a scene, or a passage in a play usually attributed to Shakespeare, to Marlowe or Greene, as he was in asserting in the face of the well-established opinion of the great majority of qualified scholars that Mark's is not the earliest Gospel, but Matthew's. In spite of the disintegrating tendency of much of his Shakesperian criticism, it is characteristic of Robertson's strong common sense that he was a determined opponent not only of "the Baconian Heresy" but also of the other and later attempts to make out that Shakespeare's works were written by Oxford or some other Elizabethan, and he never tired of ridiculing these fancies. He took a leading part in propagating in this country the so-called "Myth Theory" which holds that Jesus had no historical existence and was merely a mythological figure. This theory has not met with wide acceptance among specialists. Robertson devoted half a dozen books to it and though it is in no way an integral element in Free Thought or Rationalism, it receives quite a large amount of attention in his *History of Free Thought* regardless of the fact that the great leaders of Free Thought prior to the nineteenth century, such as Gibbon, D'Holbach or Hume were not acquainted with the Myth Theory. So when a modern supporter of that theory, such as Monsieur Edouard du Jardin, or imitators of him, apply the term Euhemerists to Rationalists such as that distinguished and learned Orientalist, the late Dr. F. C. Conybeare, they apparently overlook the fact that the same epithet would be applicable to the leaders named above or to Erasmus Darwin, Priestley, Diderot and the Encyclopædists.

Robertson's greatest work, in spite of his excursions in the Myth Theory and the Shakespearian Canon, is undoubtedly

his *History of Free Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. This work first appeared, though in much smaller form, some years ago, but it was constantly revised and added to by its author almost up to the date of his death (now three to four years back) until it became practically a new work. As such it is now issued in two handsome volumes by Messrs. Watts and Co. It is adorned by forty-eight admirable portraits, in photogravure or half-tone, of leading Free-Thinkers from Thomas Paine and Jeremy Bentham, down to Bradlaugh and T. H. Huxley. Some of the worthies whose portraits are included in this gallery, as, for instance, Bishop Colenso and Canon Cheyne, might have been a little astonished at some of the company in which they find themselves, but that does not make these excellent portraits the less interesting, and doubtless a plausible case can be presented for their inclusion.

Robertson's *History of Free Thought* opens with a survey of "The Reign of Orthodoxy," a period which of course included the eighteenth century. After chapters dealing with Religious Reaction in Britain and on the Continent, it proceeds to the Freethinking movement of the early nineteenth century, Richard Carlile, Robert Owen and C. J. Holyoake. It then devotes a chapter to the Natural Sciences before Darwin, and in the next traces the history of Biblical Criticism to Baur. The work next surveys "The Religious Resistance" 1800 to 1850. A chapter is then concerned with "Philosophy and Ethics in Transition," ranging from Kant to Herbert Spencer. Part II of the book is headed "The General Advance—British and American Writers 1840 to 1870." European Literature and Free Thought organization are then dealt with. Part III is concerned with "The Scientific Advance"—the doctrine of evolution, sociology, ethnology, psychology and ethics. Finally, Part IV is entitled "The Passing of Orthodoxy," bringing the history of Biblical criticism, philosophy and ethics down to modern times. One chapter in this part is headed "Outlying Fields," and professes to deal with the advance of Free Thought in Judaism, in Japan, India, Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Latin America, English-speaking lands, the United States, British Colonies, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Naturally Robertson was not in a position to deal adequately with such widely separated and differing areas, nor could his information be in all cases up to date. In the case of India, he devotes some brief space to Rammohun Roy, the Brahmo Samaj, Keshub Chunder Sen, etc., but the name of "Mahatma" Gandhi does not occur and Robertson does not appear to have realized how largely the Indian question turns on the freeing of the country from the age-long shackles of Brahmanism. He would not perhaps have felt much enthusiasm on behalf of the outcaste classes' demand for admission to worship Hindu gods in Hindu temples, but he could not have failed to sympathize with Gandhi's generous advocacy of the claims of the millions of depressed classes to social equality.

The above brief summary may give some idea of the immense scope of the work and its reader will follow with admiration the marked intellectual power with which Robertson conducts his survey and the remarkable erudition which the work displays. Naturally the book exhibits the defects as well as the merits of Robertson's qualities. His immense self-confidence and aggressive tone impart a hardness to his style and a constant impression of hostility to his outlook which necessarily make the book monotonous and unattractive. Thus, writing of Schleiermacher's movement, he says :—

> By verbally distinguishing between religion and dogma, he supplied comfort to generations of loose thinkers who could not realize that to say religion is a matter of feeling is only to frame a new dogma, an asseveration ending in itself and dogmatically evading the obvious retort that a systematized religion of feeling is a process of thought *on* feeling. To this day the verbal device is dear to the professional compromisers and their lay clients.

Over 600 pages written in this tone become boring, however indisputably

accurate each individual statement may be. The reader, becoming conscious of the writer's incapacity for sympathy with the point of view of his opponents, begins to want to know what could be urged on the other side. This consistent attitude of the book is, of course, the result of that *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum,* which is as much a Scottish national product as the granite of which the cities of Scotland are built. Robertson was in fact a Covenanter born out of due time and enlisted on the side of atheism. His mind was incapable of concession or compromise. His *History of Free Thought* is a work of wonderful learning and of great intellectual power. It will always remain a striking memorial to one who was in the phrase of his own country "a bonnie fighter," but it is hardly persuasive and it is doubtful whether it will attract many fresh adherents to the cause which Robertson had so much at heart.

A. G. CARDEW

[We regret to record the death of our valued contributor, Sir Alexander G. Cardew which occurred in London last January. He was ever sympathetic to our aims and a staunch upholder of Free Thought.—EDS.]

Leaves from the Jungle. By VERRIER ELWIN. (John Murray, London. 9s.)

The blindfolded person in a game of Blind-Man's-Buff is required to state the identity of the person whom he catches. Mr. Elwin is so modest that a reader of his book may find it impossible to determine "what" Mr. Elwin is. He lived for at least four years among the Gonds, an aboriginal people in Central India, acting as doctor, schoolmaster and, perhaps, as missionary : but I am still uncertain whether he is an Oxford Grouper, a Franciscan friar or just an amateur Christian. If he belongs to a denomination it is remarkable that he should write with so much compassion about adulterers and have shown as much kindness to sufferers from syphilis as to the lepers for whom he founded a settlement.

Throughout the book he writes with an engaging humour. It does not fail him even when he is dangerously sick. And whatever may be his theological colour, we must be thankful that the Gonds should have met with an Englishman so wise, so sympathetic and so delightful : not, be it understood, that Mr. Elwin says that he is delightful,—far from it : he is a man who has overcome egoism and vainglory.

In this book he sets out to convey the "mud-hut philosophy" of an obscure and illiterate people, telling us of their fantastic notions about natural phenomena. Somewhat surprisingly, we also learn that venereal disease is so common among the Gonds that one of them remarked "Oh, that ! We all have it." The Gonds may be exceedingly poor and in most ways very rudimentary, but Mr. Elwin says that he has never known of a suicide by a Gond. Moreover, he reports that they regard the cultivation of friendship as the most desirable result of being alive, and that they have six or seven well-defined degrees of friendship, each celebrated by a particular rite. In this they seem to be wiser and subtler than most of us Europeans.

Nothing in the book is more interesting or of more value than the "Notes" at the end of it. The book itself is, unfortunately, a transcription of a diary which the author, it seems, circulated among his distant friends. He probably used the telegraphic style of a diary in order to avoid the frequent use of the word "I" : but phrases like "After all, high authority for believing bliss of saved in heaven is greatly increased when they see sorrows of damned in hell" do not make comfortable reading for more than two hundred pages : and the "Notes" show that Mr. Elwin can write very pleasant English.

No one who reads this book can fail to like its author. Where is he now, I

wonder? What new way has he found of distributing help and kindness to a world which is so greatly in need of them? Romain Rolland, in a foreword, rightly compares Mr. Elwin with Albert Schweitzer who is doing, in Africa, work of equal value in a spirit equally unostentatious.

CLIFFORD BAX

Ideas and People. By CLIFFORD BAX. (Lovat Dickson, Ltd., London. 10*s.* 6*d.*)

In one of the chapters of what he calls this "quiet book about the impressions which I have received from life in this world, mostly during the last twelve years" Mr. Clifford Bax borrows from Japanese philosophy the terms *Yo* and *In* by which the active and passive principles are designated and applies them suggestively to literature and art, concluding that the greatest works of art combine them in approximately the proportion of six to four, while the lesser are deficient either in delicacy or in power. He himself, subjected to the same test, is clearly among those authors who are fine rather than forceful and one who has found it difficult to acclimatise himself in so crudely mechanised a world and age as ours. Yet while he has suffered in consequence from a sense of inadequacy, as he confesses in a chapter entitled "On Seeming to have Failed," he has never allowed a fastidious sensibility to alienate him from life, but has remained rather a curious friendly foreigner in our midst who considers himself lucky to have been born with so great a sense of wonder that he has never become accustomed to the oddness of being alive. With this endless interest in people and ideas he has continued to find romance even in an age of realism, while, like his friend Gustav Holst, he has from early youth nourished his mind upon the philosophy of the Vedanta. Ever since, however, as a boy of thirteen on a rainy day at Freshwater he opened a copy of Keats's poems, literature has been the greatest of all his interests and delights. And amid all the people, famous and obscure, with whom he makes graceful contact in this book runs the thread of his own endeavour as a writer, his labour as a poet until he was thirty-five which ended in comparative failure, and his adventures as a dramatist, first in ballad-opera under the influence of Nigel Playfair and later in tragic costume-plays, in which he achieved comparative success. But his love of art and literature has never been professional or a mere variant upon the modern interest in science and mechanism. For him art has expressed a quality of life and being, a form and graciousness which are of infinite value and which he has sought to cherish quite as much in his friendships as in his plays and essays.

It is this quality which informs this book and gives it its charm. Some may complain that Mr. Bax cultivates it at times too consciously, that, like George Moore, he is too æsthetic, too much of a connoisseur and even something of a hedonist. But the flavour of his narrative is due to the patience with which he savours his experiences and while there is little profound thinking in it or evidence of intense spiritual adventure, it reveals not only a man of taste but one who has learnt to value, with the same perceptive delicacy, men and moments, thoughts and things. Consequently the men and women to whom he introduces us, whether it be Arnold Bennett, Gordon Craig, A.E., or an anonymous policeman or artist's model are, within the limits of his humour, intimately experienced. And so are his ideas and his attachments, whether it be for village cricket or the West End of London, or his journeys to New York or Madeira. He has composed rather a "meandering meditation" than a planned autobiography. But even what is fortuitous in it has been sensitively felt and pondered.

HUGH I'A. FAUSSET

Diamonds and Dust. By BARON JEAN PELLENC (John Murray, London, 10*s.* 6*d.*)

This book describes a six months' visit to India, or rather to parts of India adjacent to the railway between Bombay, Delhi and Peshawar. It is a work of travel-talk entertainment, suitable chiefly for those who are fond of shikhar, chota-pegs and club-yarns. Taken as such, it is one of the best and most entertaining; for the author has a gift for description, marred only by frequent similes such as —in reference to Benares—"the city spews a flood of holy men" upon the river bank, where "crawl a tangle of white worms, the bathers." The Towers of Silence in Bombay are "charnel-houses, open to the sky like circus-rings piled up with corpses," and in the Caves of Elephanta "the emblems of Shiva niched within the rocky lobes are pock-marked as with ulcers."

The greater part of the book is taken up with the author's visits to several Maharajahs, who entertained him with shooting of tiger and sambhur, and occasional invitations to dinner-parties. Into these scenes the reader outside the pale is given a vicarious entrée, not unlike the glimpse into Occidental society which the poor enjoy at the cinemas.

The social spirit of the author during his travels, when he occasionally wanders in the bazaar, or falls into friendly conversation in a grocer's shop or a sculptor's studio, is that known in French India rather than in British India, which is all to the good, and he deprecates the cool disdain of the Englishman towards the "native." But when he draws conclusions—religious and political—we find only superficiality. While the heart is willing to sympathise—at a comfortable distance—the mind grasps only the usual formulas of the European critic. The author is emphatic that "Hinduism is not, as the majority of Europeans and American writers have with disgusting unanimity regarded it, a religion of savages, of idolaters and debauchees. The Brahmin faith....is the product of a philosophic system, lofty and enlightened beyond all cavil." It is part of the dilettantism of the tourist that along with this he can give us only the following piece of the *Gītā*, mistranslated beyond recognition :—

> Thou art compassionate where pity has no place. Neither for the thing that lives, nor for the thing that dies, has the wise man compassion. There can be no destroying that which is; of that which is not no existence. All that is born is doomed to die; whatever dies shall live again. With what is ineluctable pity has no concern. In the eyes of him who has attained detachment, nothing in this life below is good or ill.

"This may serve to indicate the noble spirituality of the Hindu faith," he says —whether in subtle irony or in sheer stupidity one cannot discern from the context. "Thou art grieving where grief has no place..." would be a correct rendering, leaving compassion and concern for the welfare of the world in full play, as it constantly is throughout the *Gītā*.

Sympathy for the modern-educated and the town-dwelling Indian the author has none. He puts down all their appeal for a new economic and political order merely to the discontent of the educated unemployed, without even a reference to the theories of their thinkers, or to the heroism of thousands who—whether for right or wrong political beliefs—have submitted their bodies and their pride to the severities and the indignities of the lathis and the jails. Of the same order of superficiality is the description of the people met with in Bombay, including "strange beings with distraught eyes, hailing from the impenetrable forests of Central India, or *the Madras hills!*" (Italics ours).

Altogether this is a book for such Europeans as love Asia for the superiority-complex they can enjoy in the contemplation of it during their occasional sallies from the comfortable shelter of their hotel. The book is well got-up and the twenty-eight illustrations are excellent.

ERNEST WOOD

Forty Years of Psychic Research : A *Plain Narrative of Fact.* By HAMLIN GARLAND, Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. (The Macmillan Company, New York.)

The author of this book is a well-known American novelist and lecturer who has ever since 1891, when he was "an aspiring young writer with an attic study in Boston," been an eager student of psychic phenomena. Being now in his seventy-sixth year, he feels that the result of his studies should be embodied in the permanent form of a printed volume.

In the course of his lecture tours throughout the United States Mr. Garland found opportunities of investigating the powers of many mediums ; and, after taking the most stringent precautions to eliminate the possibility of fraud, witnessed and recorded a number of extraordinary phenomena, of the reality of which even the most sceptical of his readers must—one would think—be persuaded, or rather compelled, to share his convictions.

Among the mediums investigated by Mr. Garland was the famous "Margery" (Mrs. Crandon), whose claims have been the subject of interminable controversy among psychical researchers, and against whom plausible charges of fraud have been made. Mr. Garland, however, is convinced that the phenomena he saw in Mrs. Crandon's presence under the strictest test conditions were genuine.

His final chapter, in which Mr. Garland sums up and passes judgment on the evidence he has collected, is of special interest. That supernormal phenomena actually occur he has no doubt, but their explanation is another matter. Here he confesses himself to be altogether at sea. Their cause, he thinks, is probably some abnormal power in the inner make-up of the medium ; and the spirit-hypothesis he finds untenable—certainly unproven. Mr. Garland writes :—

> Now finally if you ask me bluntly, "what is the present status of your belief ?" I must repeat that I am still the experimentalist, the seeker, and that I find myself most in harmony with those who say : "All these movements, voices, forms, are bio-dynamic in character. They are born of certain unknown powers of the human organism. They are thought-forms—resultants of mind controlling matter. They all originate in the séance room and have not been proven to go beyond it !

This conclusion seems to confirm those who think that the problem of human survival—what part of us is mortal, what survives bodily death and in what conditions—cannot be solved by any objective study, but only by introspective meditation, through which we may come to realise what in ourselves is subject to time, change and decay, and what is permanent. The mystics and occultists who have pursued this method have disclosed some of their findings for the information of the world at large, but Mr. Garland shows no sign of having given any consideration to it.

R. A. V. M.

The Hero : *A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama.* By LORD RAGLAN. (Methuen and Co., Ltd., London. 10*s.* 6*d.*)

It has been universally accepted that tradition is almost the sole source of the undated history of any nation. And with this assumption, volumes on the history of the ancient countries have been written, for which materials have been drawn from the rich source of tradition as embedded in literature of various kinds, religious and dramatic. The critical and laborious researches of scholars who have dived deep in legends have yielded notable results, which have enabled historians to reconstruct the story of ancient countries like India, Egypt, Greece and Rome. It is true that history "is the recital of the chronological sequence of events which are known to

have occurred" and that "without precise chronology there can be no history." But what is of more value than mere chronology, sometimes spoken of as the dry bones of history, is an account of the life and thought of the people. It does not therefore seem to be proper to ask a historian to set aside either the traditional pedigrees or local tradition. It may be that local tradition begins with guesses. But most of these guesses, at least so far as India is concerned, have stood the test of critical examination and have been ultimately found to be largely historical facts.

The main thesis of Lord Raglan is that there is no justification for believing in the historicity of tradition, and for taking all distinguished heroes of tradition as real persons. In other words, it is contended that traditional narratives are all myths, and are based neither upon historical facts, nor on imaginative fictions, but upon dramatic ritual or ritual drama. It is further contended that the recital of the drama was certainly a royal ritual and is at the base of the sagas themselves. It may be true that dramas in ancient countries were connected with religion and tradition. But how this connection suggests an altogether mythical and never an historical basis for traditions, is something beyond our comprehension. We know, for example, many traditional accounts given in Sanskrit plays containing valuable historical information which help us to check and confirm other pieces of evidence with regard to certain epochs in ancient Indian history. The great dramatist Kalidasa does not confine his royal heroes to the four walls of the palace or court. They are dragged out of the court to the forests and *janapadas*, where several scenes are laid. The royalty is made to get into personal touch with village and rural life. There are again dramas like *Mricchakatika* which bear no relation to royalty and royal rituals.

We are afraid we cannot subscribe to several statements made in this book. One such is that a comprehensive study of history and myth shows the historic myth to be a fiction. Confining ourselves to India and examining the Puranas, which are full of what we would term historic myths, we find often an allegorical explanation of natural phenomena. To cite an instance, the *Bhagavata Purana* devotes a number of chapters to the Jata Bharata myth which is an "untrue story," and explains the allegory in a concluding chapter. Later on, in narrating the Ajamila story, the same Purana prefaces it with the observation that it is an historical narrative. Thus the Hindu Purana writers differentiated between legend which is not an untrue story and legend which is an untrue story. To designate every tradition as fiction and fairy-tales is, in our opinion, unduly to stress one viewpoint to the detriment of the other. Excepting a casual reference in one or two places, the author has not pressed into service Indian and Eastern traditions.

V. R. R. DIKSHITAR

CORRESPONDENCE

A PROTEST AND A REJOINDER

I

In view of certain inaccuracies and mis-statements in your reviewer's notice of my book, *The Problem of Rebirth*, I trust you will kindly be good enough to insert the following :—

Your reviewer says that "my amazing statement that most of the Theosophical teachings on Reincarnation were taken direct from the alleged spirit communications of Allan Kardec betrays not only lamentable ignorance of Theosophy but gross irresponsibility in writing of a topic without any adequate study."

Permit me to say in the first place that I made no such statement and could only be made to appear to do so by your reviewer quoting a garbled portion of a sentence in my book, which if quoted in full would be shown to bear a very different meaning. What I actually said was that "it might be claimed" that the greater part of the doctrines of Theosophy on the subject of Reincarnation so originated.

This is indisputable as the dates of the publication of Allan Kardec's books which enjoyed a very wide circulation and the date of the foundation of the Theosophical Society in 1875 conclusively prove. Allan Kardec was a contemporary of Napoleon III, with whom he was well acquainted and who took a great interest in his work. He died in 1869 shortly before Napoleon's downfall. Thus his work was completed long before the foundation of the T. S. The teaching of Allan Kardec and the later teaching of Madame Blavatsky have much in common and it is difficult to believe that H.P.B. was unfamiliar with his work. Thus, as I pointed out, a critic who adopted the view that one to a considerable extent borrowed from the other would be in a position to make out a very plausible case. That is a very different thing to what your reviewer makes me say. I expressed no personal opinion on the matter.

Your reviewer again flatly contradicts a statement of mine which is absolutely correct. He says that "to say that at an early stage Madame Blavatsky was a sceptic on the question of Reincarnation [I intended, of course, its general applicability as a broad principle] and only became convinced later on, is to indulge in fancy and repeat a mistake."

I have only to quote Madame Blavatsky's own words to prove my case. I quote from "Isis Unveiled" Vol. I, p. 351, of which work, curiously enough, in spite of your reviewer's remarks on my ignorance, I appear to have considerably more knowledge than he has himself.

H.P.B. writes :—

> Reincarnation, i.e., the appearance of the same individual, or rather of his astral monad, twice on the same planet is *not a rule in nature*. [Italics are Mr. Shirley's.—EDS.] It is an exception like the teratological phenomenon of a two-headed infant... If reason has been so far developed as to become active and discriminative there is no reincarnation on this earth.

Reincarnation in short in her view at the time was a very rare abnormality. Compare this with the opinions she expressed later and which the Society has unquestioningly adopted, opinions which are too well-known to need citation. More might be quoted but this is sufficient to establish my case. H.P.B. expressly repudiated reincarnation as a law of nature, then later on, finding that she had been misled, turned her back, like the wise woman she was, on her earlier teaching. What a pity it is that so many modern Theosophists have failed to imbibe the broad-minded receptivity and willingness to learn of their founder.

As to "my gross irresponsibility in writing of this topic without any

adequate study," it might be impertinent on my part to make a comment, but I can imagine that there are many readers in various quarters of the world familiar with my work in the past who would be vastly amused with this observation, and among them not a few Theosophists.

RALPH SHIRLEY

II

The Hon. Ralph Shirley has completely failed to convince me as to either my "inaccuracies" or my "mis-statements."

With regard to the third paragraph in his letter, let me quote in full the passage in his book and let the reader judge if he has been misrepresented :—

> It will be observed to how large an extent Theosophy has reproduced the teachings of Allan Kardec. It might, in fact, be claimed that by far the greater part of the doctrines of Theosophy on the subject of Reincarnation are taken direct from the alleged spirit communications which were the foundation-stones of Allan Kardec's philosophy of life. The main point in which they differ is in regard to the length of time spent by discarnate spirits in the other world between one Reincarnation and another. This sojourn was considered very much shorter by the school of Allan Kardec than by the orthodox Theosophists, if such a term may be allowed. It is in any case impossible to doubt that the influence of Allan Kardec on Theosophical thought has been very far reaching in spite of the fact that his spiritualistic views met with very little sympathy in that quarter.

Turning to the fourth paragraph, it is certain that, at the time of writing *Isis Unveiled*, H. P. B. was acquainted with the teachings of Allan Kardec. In one or two places in her book she did refer to the Kardec school of spiritists but only to point out certain differences between their views and her own Theosophical teaching. Mr. Shirley has utterly failed to show that "the influence of Allan Kardec on Theosophical thought has been very far reaching." If Mr. Shirley could not find space in his general survey to adduce some specific evidence for his statement, he should have left it alone.

As to Mr. Shirley's quotation from *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. 351, we give what Madame Blavatsky herself wrote on that very passage in *Lucifer* for February 1889 (Vol. III, p. 527. footnote):—"It was meant to upset the theories of the French Reincarnationists who maintain that the same *personality* is reincarnated only a few days after death..."

That Mr. Shirley should at this late date think that H.P.B. was even sceptical about the Theosophical doctrine of Reincarnation, is lamentable. But others before him have thought likewise and even contended that reincarnation is denied in *Isis* save in the occasional return of a depraved spirit and in three other specified cases. This charge was contradicted at the time by H.P.B. in *The Theosophist* for August, 1882, (Vol. III, p. 288), and on its being repeated, it was again refuted in "Theories about Reincarnation and Spirits," which appeared in Mr. Judge's *Path* for November, 1886 and January, 1887 (Vol. I, pp. 232 and 320); and yet once again in the very valuable and illuminating footnote in *Lucifer*, Vol. III, already referred to. Lastly, H. P. B.'s article, "My Books," (*Lucifer*, Vol. VIII, p. 241), should be read in connection with the subject.

But it is a matter of wonder and regret to the reviewer that Mr. Shirley could have read and studied *Isis Unveiled*, with its wealth of information and occult knowledge, its obvious sympathy with Oriental thought in general and Buddhist psycho-philosophy in particular, and yet when he came across an avowedly difficult and obscure passage does not seem to have paused to wonder what H.P.B. was really trying to express, however imperfectly. In the early 'eighties of last century, confusion and misunderstanding were more explicable, but they cannot be passed over lightly forty-five years after H.P.B.'s death, and with her written explanation available to any student.

So I find I cannot withdraw one word of what I wrote in my review, and if Mr. Shirley does not like it I cannot help it.

N. K.

ENDS AND SAYINGS

DISCIPLINE FOR THE WORLDLY MAN

[Mencius, the latinized form of Meng-tsze, was a Chinese moral teacher, whose name stands only second to Confucius. He lived to a great age, and died in 289 B.C. The quotations from the writings of this philosopher, given below, are as applicable to-day as when they were written. The translation is taken from *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. II, by Dr. James Legge. (Clarendon Press, 1895).

Spontaneity in living is the key-note of Chinese ethical philosophy. In the performance of duty, as well as in any attempt at higher living, the advice given is the same as that given in *Light on the Path*: "Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal."—EDS.]

To nourish the mind there is nothing better than to make the desires few. Here is a man whose desires are few:—in some things he may not be able to keep his heart, but they will be few. Here is a man whose desires are many:—in some things he may be able to keep his heart, but they will be few.

The hungry think any food sweet, and the thirsty think the same of any drink, and thus they do not get the right taste of what they eat and drink. The hunger and thirst, in fact, injure their palate. And is it only the mouth and belly which are injured by hunger and thirst? Men's minds are also injured by them.

He who rises at cock-crowing, and addresses himself earnestly to the practice of virtue, is a disciple of Shun. He who rises at cock-crowing and addresses himself earnestly to the pursuit of gain, is a disciple of Chih. If you want to know what separates Shun from Chih, it is simply this,—the interval between the thought of gain and the thought of virtue.

Let a man not do what his own sense of righteousness tells him not to do, and let him not desire what his sense of righteousness tells him not to desire;—to act thus is all he has to do.

If you know that the thing is unrighteous, then use all despatch in putting an end to it:—why wait till next year?

Men who are possessed of intelligent virtue and prudence in affairs will generally be found to have been in sickness and troubles.

The path of duty lies in what is near, and men seek for it in what is remote. The work of duty lies in what is easy, and men seek for it in what is difficult.

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